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THESIS

EASTERN EUROPE AND THE 2002-2003 IRAQ CRISIS

by

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EASTERN EUROPE AND THE 2002-2003 IRAQ CRISIS

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ABSTRACT

In the 2002-2003 Iraq crisis, most Eastern European countries aimed first of all to maintain positive relations with their main strategic partner, the United States. This priority was closely connected with NATO, Eastern Europe's preferred collective defense organization. Eastern European governments were concerned that if they supported the position of France and Germany regarding the Iraq crisis, the greater U.S. frustration with present and future European NATO partners might have eventually led to a weakening of the NATO collective defense commitment and a reduction in U.S. interest in Europe. This outcome would have signified the disappearance of the security guarantee that most Eastern European countries have been seeking since the beginning of the 1990s and that they would prefer to rely on in the long term. Eastern European countries are prepared to make significant efforts to uphold NATO's effectiveness. Indeed, the main mission of Eastern Europe in the future may be to keep the United States effectively engaged in Europe and to sustain NATO's cohesion and relevance. It is possible that NATO will survive in the long term partly because Eastern European countries have enthusiastically embraced this alliance.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the factors that led thirteen Eastern European governments to take pro-American positions regarding the Iraq crisis in 2002 – 2003. It then assesses the implications of these factors for politics in Europe and transatlantic relations.

The analysis addresses the following questions: How were the positions regarding the Iraq crisis set in these Eastern European countries? Why were the positions in all these Eastern European countries pro-American? What is the importance and relevance of this fact? How will Eastern European orientations favorable to U.S. policy influence the future development of NATO and the EU?

A. BACKGROUND

On 30 January 2003, the leaders of eight European countries published a letter expressing support for the U.S. position regarding the Iraq crisis. Besides the governments of Britain, Denmark, Italy, Portugal, and Spain, three Eastern European governments – the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland – signed the letter.¹

On 5 February 2003, the leaders of ten Eastern European countries published a similar statement of support for U.S. policy regarding the Iraq crisis. This letter was signed by a group of Eastern European countries known from their cooperation concerning membership in NATO as the “Vilnius group” - Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.²

In March-April 2003, Poland contributed troops to the U.S.-led military campaign against Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq. The Czech Republic deployed a chemical defense unit in Kuwait for possible use in the war in Iraq. Hungary allowed the United

¹ The full text of the letter available at <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/terror/03013007.htm> [15 April 2003]

² The full text of the statement is available at <http://www.useu.be/Categories/GlobalAffairs/Iraq/Feb0503VilniusIraq.html> [15 April 2003]

States to conduct the training of Iraqi opposition members who would serve as interpreters for the U.S. troops in Iraq at the Taszar military base.³

Furthermore, almost all of these countries have assigned military and civilian assets to the post-conflict rebuilding process in Iraq. Some of these countries may also deploy personnel and equipment in Bahrain, Kuwait, or Qatar.⁴

Why did these thirteen Eastern European countries support the U.S. position in the Iraq crisis?⁵ Was it a spontaneous reaction to the rapidly evolving events or was it the predictable result of a decade of Eastern European security policy developments? What happened to the political, economic, cultural, historical and geographical connections of Eastern Europe with Germany and France, which adopted another view on how to resolve the Iraq crisis? Finally, how will the pro-American positions taken by these Eastern European countries influence the development of NATO and the EU?

It is important to answer these questions because they will help to determine the future of NATO and trans-Atlantic relations. In other words, these questions concern the future of security arrangements in the Euro-Atlantic region and beyond.

B. MAJOR QUESTIONS

What have been the main factors influencing Eastern European positions and diplomatic reactions towards the Iraq crisis? Specific factors, it should be recognized, may complement or contradict each other.

Has the main influence on the decision-making of the Eastern European governments been a concern for physical security? Have Eastern European governments

³ Jeffrey Donovan, "Eastern Europe: Vilnius Group Supports U.S. On Iraq," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 6 February 2003, available at <http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/2003/02/06022003175020.asp> [15 November 2003]

⁴ Of the thirteen Eastern European countries listed above, only Slovenia does not plan to make any direct military contributions to the stabilization operations in post-war Iraq.

Ken Guggenheim, "U.S. Senate Approves NATO Enlargement, Asks To Review Consensus Policy," Associated Press, 8 May 2003, available at http://www27.brinkster.com/licenta/fise.rez.det.asp?art_id=399 [15 May 2003]

⁵ Azerbaijan and Georgia also supported the U.S. position regarding the Iraq crisis. Nevertheless, in this thesis the term "Eastern European countries" is used to refer to the policies of the governments of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, FYROM, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

seen it in their national interests to keep a balance of power in Eastern Europe by encouraging continued U.S. involvement in this region to balance Russia?

To what extent is historical heritage a factor – the “grey zone” legacy of Eastern Europe? Are Eastern Europeans still skeptical about the role of international law in relation to the realities of power politics? Do Eastern Europeans fear that they will again experience a situation in which everyone but at the same time no one in particular is responsible for events in Eastern Europe?

To what extent are the key influences the human and moral dimensions? How are differences in the historical backgrounds of Eastern and Western European countries reflected in their policies concerning war and peace?

C. THESIS ORGANIZATION

The thesis is organized as follows. Chapter II examines the emergence of the Iraq crisis and how it initially was addressed by the United Nations Security Council and major NATO countries (France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States). The chapter then reviews how the Iraq crisis unfolded during the period prior to the use of force in March-April 2003 and how two distinct positions (and groups of countries) appeared in transatlantic diplomacy.

Chapter III discusses the historical processes, contemporary events, and security policy assessments, which led the Eastern European governments to support the American position on how to resolve the Iraq crisis. The chapter reviews the internal discussions in four Eastern European countries – Albania, Bulgaria, Latvia, and Poland – and why each of these countries decided to support the U.S. view on the Iraq crisis.

Chapter IV analyzes the consequences for NATO and the EU of the policies of the Eastern European countries regarding the Iraq crisis. The chapter evaluates various factors that may influence the development of these organizations from the perspective of the Eastern European countries.

Chapter V presents conclusions concerning Eastern European reactions to the Iraq crisis. The chapter summarizes findings about the implications of Eastern European policies for transatlantic relations.

II. THE IRAQ CRISIS

A. HOW THE CRISIS EMERGED

UN Security Council Resolution 687, adopted on 3 April 1991, set the cease-fire terms after the U.S.-led coalition liberated Kuwait, which had been occupied by Iraq in August 1990. The resolution stipulated that “Iraq shall unconditionally accept the destruction, removal, or rendering harmless” of all its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. It also prohibited Iraq’s acquisition of any nuclear materials and established “the future ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq’s compliance.”⁶

Nevertheless, in subsequent years the UN Security Council approved a series of new resolutions (707, 715, 986, 1154, 1284 and 1409) that dealt with Iraq’s non-compliance and hampering of inspections. Finally, on 16 December 1998 (before the U.S. and British governments carried out air strikes for three days) weapons inspectors left Iraq with many unanswered questions and pronounced their work in Iraq incomplete. In answer to that, however, Iraq declared the work of the weapons inspectors finished.⁷

After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 all European governments condemned the terrorists and expressed support for the United States war against the organizers of the 11 September 2001 attacks – the Al Qaeda terrorist network, which was sheltered by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The French and German governments and several other governments sent military forces to Afghanistan.⁸ However, the United States chose to fight this war without official NATO involvement beyond the eight

⁶ UN Security Council Resolution 687 is available at <http://www.fas.org/news/un/iraq/sres/sres0687.htm> [15 April 2003]

⁷ “Iraq: A Chronology of UN Inspections And an Assessment of Their Accomplishments, 1990-2002,” Arms Control Association, *Arms Control Today*, October 2002, available at http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2002_10/iraqspecialoct02.asp [15 November 2003]

⁸ Philip Gordon, “The Crisis In The Alliance,” 24 February 2003, available at <http://dkuk.wz.cz/ResearchPack/iraq.pdf> [15 November 2003]

measures approved by the North Atlantic Council in October 2001.⁹ Many NATO countries became members of the U.S.-led coalition, arranging their participation on a bilateral basis.

Further friction on global security issues in the transatlantic community arose on 29 January 2002, when the United States President described Iraq, Iran and North Korea as an “axis of evil.”¹⁰ U.S. President George W. Bush stated that “America will do all that is necessary to ensure our nation’s security.”¹¹

The President’s inclusion of Iraq in the “axis of evil” was consistent with the U.S. administration’s policy demanding rapid international actions to ensure that Iraq would not develop WMD in the future.

On 12 September 2002, the President of the United States delivered a speech at the United Nations calling upon its member states to make sure that “the Security Council resolutions will be enforced” and warning that “the United States of America will make that stand.”¹² Consequently, the United States continued its diplomatic efforts to persuade the UN Security Council members of the urgent need to address the Iraq crisis by all means necessary. On 16 September 2002, Iraq agreed to accept (for the first time since 1998) the return of weapons inspectors “without conditions.”¹³ On 2 October 2002, the U.S. Congress approved the use of military force if Iraq would not peacefully disarm.¹⁴

⁹ States Statement to the Press by NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson, on the North Atlantic Council Decision On Implementation Of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty following the 11 September Attacks against the United States, 4 October 2001, available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s011004b.htm> [15 April 2003]

¹⁰ “The President’s State of the Union Address,” Office of the Press Secretary, 29 January 2002, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html> [15 November 2003]

¹¹ “The President’s State of the Union Address,” Office of the Press Secretary, 29 January 2002, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html> [15 November 2003]

¹² “President’s Remarks at the United Nations General Assembly,” Office of the Press Secretary, 12 September 2002 available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020912-1.html> [15 November 2003]

¹³ “Iraq Agrees To Weapons Inspections,” CNN.com, 17 September 2002, available at <http://www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/meast/09/16/iraq.un.letter/> [15 November 2003]

¹⁴ Joint Resolution to Authorize the use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021002-2.html> [15 November 2003]

It seemed for a while that differences had been overcome when, after a month of diplomatic discussions, the UN Security Council on 8 November 2003 approved Resolution 1441 by a vote of 15-0.

UN Security Council Resolution 1441 demanded that Iraq ensure an “accurate, full, and complete declaration of all aspects of its programmes to develop chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles and other delivery systems.” Additionally, it required Iraq to cooperate fully and unconditionally with inspectors from the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency.¹⁵

In some countries (including the United States) the resolution was regarded as a final opportunity for Iraq to disarm.¹⁶ This approach was reaffirmed at NATO’s November 2002 Prague summit. In addition to making decisions on enlargement, the launching of the NATO Response Force project, and the Prague Capabilities Commitment, the NATO Allies underlined their common desire to resolve the Iraq crisis.¹⁷

Nevertheless, the weapons inspectors in Iraq were not able to deliver a rapid, decisive and compelling statement about the existence of WMD in Iraq. Some countries shared the U.S. administration’s view that Iraq’s behavior was intended to buy time and to hide Baghdad’s real intentions. Accordingly, the next dispute between UN Security Council members arose concerning the legally correct interpretation of the Resolution 1441 commitments. Different interpretations appeared about the consequences in case of Iraq’s non-compliance with Resolution 1441.¹⁸

The United States insisted that the reference to “serious consequences” in the resolution would mean military action. The United States noted that Iraq had had 11

¹⁵Resolution 1441 is available at <http://www.un.int/usa/sres-iraq.htm> [15 April 2003]

¹⁶ “Senators Welcome Support on Iraq from 18 European Countries,” U.S. Department Of State, International Information Programs, 11 February 2003 available at <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/nato/03021202.htm> [15 November 2003]

¹⁷ NATO’s Prague Summit Statement on Iraq is available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-133e.htm> [15 November 2003]

¹⁸ Philip Gordon, “The Crisis In The Alliance,” 24 February 2003 available at <http://dkuk.wz.cz/ResearchPack/iraq.pdf> [15 November 2003]

years to disarm,¹⁹ but that Iraq had not clearly decided give up its weapons programs even since the UN Security Council had approved Resolution 1441. Iraq's non-cooperation with weapons inspectors was interpreted by the United States as a breach of the resolution. The U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, John Negroponte, said, "It is incumbent upon Iraq to cooperate fully and pro-actively as soon as possible with the inspection regime. ... For it not to do so constitutes the loss of a very, very important opportunity to resolve this matter by peaceful means. And if it is not resolved by peaceful means, the responsibility will fall fully upon the shoulders of Iraq."²⁰

At the same time Belgium, France, and Germany offered their own interpretation of the resolution, arguing that Iraq's unwillingness to reveal more about its WMD programs would not necessarily constitute a justification for war (*casus belli*). They recommended that the UN weapons inspections be expanded and saw no reason to discuss an immediate timetable for military action.²¹

This second approach to the resolution of the Iraq crisis was accepted not only by the governments of Belgium, France, and Germany. Enhanced measures for the containment of the Iraq crisis without war were endorsed by the overwhelming majority of public opinion in Europe. Moreover, in March 2003 Europe witnessed a series of large anti-war demonstrations.²² Russia and China (both permanent members of the UN Security Council) also insisted that war with Iraq was not justified and proposed that more intense diplomatic pressure and arms inspections be used in relations with Iraq.²³

¹⁹ "President Bush Discusses Iraq," Office of the Press Secretary, 14 January 2003, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030114-2.html> [15 April 2003]

²⁰ Negroponte quoted in Judy Aita, "Iraq in 'Further Material Breach' of U.N. Resolution, U.S. Says," Washington File Staff Writer, 9 January 2003, available at <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/usandun/03010903.htm> [15 November 2003]

²¹ Philip Gordon, "The Crisis In The Alliance," 24 February 2003 available at <http://dkuk.wz.cz/ResearchPack/iraq.pdf> [15 November 2003]

²² Philip Gordon, "The Crisis In The Alliance," 24 February 2003 available at <http://dkuk.wz.cz/ResearchPack/iraq.pdf> [15 November 2003]

²³ "Western Leaders' Iraq Rift Grows," CNN.com, 23 January 2003 available at <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/01/23/sprj.irq.europe.rumsfeld/index.html> [15 November 2003]

The public opinion polls even in historically strongly pro-American countries were unexpectedly negative. 84% in Britain, 80% in the Netherlands, 75% in Poland and over 90% in Turkey opposed the U.S. policy concerning the Iraq crisis.²⁴

Because of this public pressure to use military means only in accordance with a certain interpretation of international law (that is, with an additional UN Security Council authorization for the use of force), the main U.S. ally during the Iraq crisis – the British government – proposed another UN Security Council resolution. However, after unsuccessful attempts to gather sufficient support from the UN Security Council countries, the proposed new resolution stating that the UN Security Council was “determined to secure full compliance with its decisions and to restore international peace and security in the area”²⁵ was removed from the agenda, and the U.S.-led coalition based its actions on the legal ground furnished by previous resolutions.²⁶

B. THE TRANSATLANTIC DIPLOMACY IN 2002-2003

In August 2002, the U.S. government raised strong arguments about the need to replace the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq. These arguments were generally not welcomed in Europe. The German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, announced in his election campaign in September 2002 that “Under my leadership, Germany will not take part in an intervention in Iraq.”²⁷ France also expressed reservations about bringing about regime change in Iraq by military means. The British government, however, supported the U.S. position on the Iraq crisis. European countries started to form two competing camps. The countries supporting the U.S. policy included Britain, Denmark, Italy, the

²⁴ Philip Gordon, “The Crisis In The Alliance,” 24 February 2003 available at <http://dkuk.wz.cz/ResearchPack/iraq.pdf> [15 November 2003]

²⁵ First Britain, Spain and the United States Draft Resolution: 24 February 2003 available at <http://www.un.int/usa/scdraft-iraq-2-24-03> [15 November 2003] and Second United Nations Draft Resolution tabled by Britain, Spain and the United States, 7 March 2003 available at <http://www.iraqcrisis.co.uk/resources.php?idtag=R3E706B6DB7EC7> [15 November 2003]

²⁶ Philip Gordon, “The Crisis In The Alliance,” 24 February 2003 available at <http://dkuk.wz.cz/ResearchPack/iraq.pdf> [15 November 2003]

²⁷ Schroeder quoted in “A News Hour With Jim Lehrer Transcript, Background: Germany,” *Online News Hour*, 23 September 2002, available at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/europe/july-dec02/bkgdgermany_9-23.html [15 November 2003]

Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain; and the countries that opposed the U.S. policy included Austria, Belgium, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland and Luxembourg.²⁸

Inevitably the controversy dividing the Western countries on the settlement of the Iraq crisis spilled over into the main international organizations. The Iraq crisis seriously affected the EU, NATO and the UN. Some observers argue that UN Security Council authority was diminished because the war was conducted without an additional resolution explicitly authorizing the use of force. As noted in Chapter IV of this thesis, it can be argued that NATO lost part of its credibility as a reliable security guarantor in the eyes of some countries in February 2003, owing to the dispute about deciding to take measures to protect Turkey. As a result, flexible coalitions of the willing have been mentioned as preferred future security cooperation frameworks by some politicians. The EU declarations on the future of the Common Foreign and Security Policy were seriously undermined during the Iraq crisis, because bilateral relations and national interests seemed to play a more important role than the wish to pursue a common European Union policy.

One may argue that the EU countries reached a consensus on 17 February 2003, when they agreed on certain points concerning the Iraq crisis.²⁹ The ambiguous EU Council statement on Iraq on 17 February 2003 asked Baghdad to disarm “immediately and fully.... Force should only be used as a last resort. It is for the Iraqi regime to end this crisis by complying with the demands of the Security Council.”³⁰

However, the common declaration of the EU Summit on 17 February 2003 left the question of timing unresolved.³¹ According to *The Economist*, the EU view that the UN weapons inspectors must be given “the time and resources the UN Security Council

²⁸ “More Divided Than Ever,” *El Pais*, 25 March 2003, available at <http://store.yahoo.com/expandnato/nedbmar03.html> [10 May 2003]

²⁹ Available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/councils/bx20030217/index_en.htm [10 May 2003]

³⁰ EU Council statement quoted in Richard Bernstein, “EU Says Iraq Must Disarm Quickly And Fully,” *New York Times*, 18 February 2003, available at http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/featured_articles/20030219wednesday.html [10 May 2003], available at Full text of The Eu Council’s Statement On Iraq - http://europa.eu.int/comm/councils/bx20030217/index_en.htm [10 May 2003]

³¹ “United In Theory, Divided In Practice,” *The Economist*, 20 February 2003, available at <http://dkuk.wz.cz/ResearchPack/iraq.pdf> [10 November 2003]

believes that they need” was “a sop to the Franco-German position,” while the EU statement that “inspections cannot continue indefinitely” was “a nod to the Spanish-British position.”³² Additionally, the two previously published open letters by the heads of eighteen European governments clearly indicated the rift in Europe.³³

As the Iraq crisis evolved and the transatlantic rift deepened, NATO became the next victim of political controversy. Although the United States in 2001 did not ask NATO to play a major role in the war against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, in late 2002 the United States asked the NATO Allies to take precautionary measures in support of Turkey’s defense in case of military action by Iraq. The culmination of the crisis in NATO came on 10 February 2003, when Belgium, France and Germany broke the silence procedure (that is, blocked the decision) to endorse the “prudent contingency planning to deter or defend against a possible threat to Turkey”³⁴ that would consist of indirect military support including the deployment of Patriot missiles and AWACS aircraft. These three governments argued that such a NATO decision would be wrong, because it would imply that war was inevitable. The question of support to Turkey was an excellent example of how strained transatlantic relations can spill into other areas.³⁵ This event played into the hands of the skeptics about NATO’s reliability as a security guarantor.

The NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson, tried to smooth over the crisis within the Alliance by arguing that “The question still is not ‘if’ but ‘when.’”³⁶ He added

³² “United in Theory, Divided in Practice,” *The Economist*, 20 February 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MewBkd/message/2266> [10 November 2003]

³³ The first letter, released on 30 January 2003, was endorsed by Britain, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, and Spain, and is available at <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/terror/03013007.htm> [15 April 2003]. The second letter, released on 5 February 2003, was endorsed by Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, the FYROM, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia and is available at <http://www.useu.be/Categories/GlobalAffairs/Iraq/Feb0503VilniusIraq.html> [10 November 2003].

³⁴ Press statement by NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2003/s030210a.htm> [10 April 2003]

³⁵ Philip Gordon, “The Crisis In The Alliance,” 24 February 2003 available at <http://dkuk.wz.cz/ResearchPack/iraq.pdf> [10 November 2003]

³⁶ Press statement by NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2003/s030210a.htm> [10 November 2003]

that “There is a disagreement on timing at the moment by a small number of nations, but there is no disagreement on substance at all.”³⁷

However, the U.S. President commented that he was “disappointed” with the activities in NATO.³⁸ Furthermore, the U.S. Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, criticized Belgium, France and Germany as “problem” countries for keeping “NATO from fulfilling its obligation.”³⁹

To explain their positions Belgium, France and Germany stated that they were ready to honor their North Atlantic Treaty commitments, but that at that moment any military preparations would send the wrong signal about the prospects for a diplomatic solution. In the words of the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, “War may never be considered unavoidable. ... Everything must be done to achieve the implementation of the (U.N.) resolution by peaceful means. That is the common position of France and Germany and we will not be diverted from it.”⁴⁰ These countries insisted that an immediate war with Iraq would not be wise and that UN arms inspectors should be given more time.⁴¹ They suggested that all political possibilities for a peaceful resolution of the crisis be completely exhausted before going to war with Iraq.

In the development of the Iraq crisis, Germany played an important role. In contrast to France’s traditional Gaullist foreign policy, Germany shifted from its traditional role of being a mediator between the United States and France. In the Iraq crisis Germany took a position similar to that of France in certain respects.

³⁷ “Western Leaders’ Iraq Rift Grows,” CNN.com, 23 January 2003 available at <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/01/23/sprj.irq.europe.rumsfeld/index.html> [10 November 2003]

³⁸ Bush quoted in “Bush ‘disappointed’ by NATO stalemate,” CNN.com, 10 February 2003 available at <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/02/10/sprj.irq.wrap/> [10 November 2003]

³⁹ Rumsfeld quoted in “Western Leaders’ Iraq Rift Grows,” CNN.com, 23 January 2003 available at <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/01/23/sprj.irq.europe.rumsfeld/index.html> [10 November 2003], available at and in “Bush ‘disappointed’ by NATO stalemate,” CNN.com, 10 February 2003 available at <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/02/10/sprj.irq.wrap/> [10 November 2003].

⁴⁰ “Western Leaders’ Iraq Rift Grows,” CNN.com, 23 January 2003 available at <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/01/23/sprj.irq.europe.rumsfeld/index.html> [10 November 2003]

⁴¹ “Western Leaders’ Iraq Rift Grows,” CNN.com, 23 January 2003 available at <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/01/23/sprj.irq.europe.rumsfeld/index.html> [10 November 2003]

The decision by the German Chancellor to rule out any German participation in any eventual use of force against Iraq in the September 2002 election campaign rapidly led to an erosion of relations between the political leaders of the United States and Germany.⁴²

At the end of 2002 the Eastern European countries, many of which just had received invitations at the NATO Prague Summit and the EU Copenhagen Summit to join these organizations, got involved in the serious controversies between leading European countries and the United States. During the next several months the Eastern European countries faced a difficult political task – to pursue their national security policy interests (including the successful functioning of the enlarged NATO and the enlarged EU), to avoid antagonizing the major powers, and to keep in touch with their own publics.

⁴² The most notorious example came when German Justice Minister Herta Daeubler-Gmelin told the regional newspaper *Schwaebisches Tagblatt*: “Bush wants to distract attention from his domestic problems. That's a popular method. Even Hitler did that.”

“Bush Gets Apology For Hitler Remark,” CBSNEWS.com, 21 September 2002, available at <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/09/21/world/main522862.shtml> [10 November 2003]

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III. SELECTED EASTERN EUROPEAN EXAMPLES

In order to explain Eastern European behavior regarding the Iraq crisis, it is necessary first of all to clarify the determinants of Eastern European security policies, notably with respect to the United States.

All Eastern European countries see the best guarantee of their national security in close cooperation with strong external powers. None of the Eastern European countries can prudently rely only on its own capabilities to meet its national security requirements. According to the President of Latvia, Vaira Vike-Freiberga, “In our history, we have learned that our only chance for real security is standing with our allies, and hoping they will stand by us.”⁴³

Eastern European countries see the possible accomplishment of this aim only in strategic partnership with the United States. For this reason it is important to maintain solid U.S. involvement in an enlarged NATO and in Europe.

Eastern European countries generally agree that their security prospects would have a grim future without a strong U.S. presence in Eastern Europe. They would have to face growing Russian influence alone.⁴⁴ All Eastern European countries have fresh and compelling memories of dominating Russian influence in the region in recent centuries, notably in the period 1940-1991. Russia will always be present in Eastern Europe, but the presence of Western powers may not be permanent.

Despite various recent achievements regarding NATO and the EU, the value of the U.S. partnership and strong presence in NATO and Europe is still a common vital security policy priority for most Eastern European countries.

Without significant U.S. assistance, Eastern European countries might find themselves in a hostage role, if they relied only on Western Europe for help in addressing

⁴³ Vaira Vike-Freiberga quoted in “Vaira Vike-Freiberga – The New Voice Of ‘New Europe,’” Stratfor.com, 4 March 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/627> [10 November 2003]

⁴⁴ Patrick E. Tyler, “As Cold War Link Itself Grows Cold, Europe Seems To Lose Value For Bush,” *New York Times*, 12 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbfeb03.html> [10 November 2003]

hard security challenges. Western European countries tend to see Russia as a source of energy, but Eastern European countries see Russia as the former hegemon with a history of 50 years of dominance (1940-1991) in the recent past. Eastern Europeans want to work with Western organizations, including NATO and the EU, to diminish the influence of the former master and to obtain the capacity to pursue a dialogue with greater confidence in their security. How can Eastern European countries rely on France and Germany in questions of hard security, when as recently as 2001 these countries, for their own reasons (concern about relations with Russia in Germany's case,⁴⁵ an interest in European Union defense and security autonomy in France's case⁴⁶) hesitated to support large-scale NATO enlargement? Eastern European countries remember well that the United States was the main advocate of NATO enlargement after 1999 and judge that, if not for the United States, for many of them NATO membership would still be a long-term future prospect.⁴⁷ President George W. Bush in his speech in Warsaw on 21 June 2001 for the first time outlined the U.S. policy favoring a robust NATO enlargement "from the Baltics to the Black Sea."⁴⁸ The new vision made obsolete the previous view that only one to four countries might be invited to join NATO at the Prague Summit. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and America's leading role in the fight against terrorism reinforced the view that NATO must include countries that would be valuable allies in facing new kinds of threats.⁴⁹

Eastern European countries also see the United States as the main force that liberated them from Soviet dominance and as the key factor in their successful inclusion

⁴⁵ "Germany and the United States: Considerations For The New Admission," American Institute for Contemporary German Studies – The Johns Hopkins University, 2001,p.4, available at <http://www.aicgs.org/publications/PDF/commissionreport.pdf> [10 November 2003]

⁴⁶ Stephen Larrabee, "Nato Enlargement: Prague and Beyond," Prepared for the IISS/CEPS European Security Forum, 9 July 2001, available at <http://www.eusec.org/larrabee.htm> [10 November 2003]

⁴⁷ Testimony By Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns, U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO, on the Future of NATO to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 1 April 2003, available at <http://foreign.senate.gov/hearings/BurnsTestimony030401.pdf> [15 May 2003]

⁴⁸ "Remarks by the President in Address to Faculty and Students of Warsaw University," Office of the Press Secretary, 15 June 2001, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/06/20010615-1.html> [15 November 2003]

⁴⁹ "Testimony By Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns, U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO, on the Future Of NATO To The Senate Foreign Relations Committee," 1 April 2003, available at <http://foreign.senate.gov/hearings/BurnsTestimony030401.pdf> [15 May 2003]

in NATO – the defense community of the Western democracies.⁵⁰ This historical experience has led Eastern European countries to support U.S. leadership in meeting the challenges of the 21st century.⁵¹

The European Union, despite its close proximity to Eastern Europe, did not approve EU enlargement until it was clear that seven additional Eastern European countries would become part of the security area under the NATO collective defense umbrella.⁵² NATO invited the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland to join the Alliance at the July 1997 Madrid summit. NATO invited Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia to join the Alliance at the November 2002 Prague Summit. The NATO membership process for these seven countries is expected to be complete in May 2004. During the same month the EU is to admit ten new members: the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Malta, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

At present, Eastern European countries continue to regard the United States as the most reliable force in hard security matters and consider the EU's military value as virtual at best.⁵³

The Eastern European countries have profound doubts about the political as well as military ability of the EU to protect them in a crisis. Presently Eastern Europeans are afraid to put the future of their region's security in the hands of the EU. Reliance on Western European countries for security has not worked well for most Eastern European countries since the Middle Ages. As Martin Wight observed,

Western Europe, in the farthest extremities of the European peninsula, was sheltered and insulated by Eastern Europe, whose history was punctuated by the flow of invasions from the east and their reflux from the west. . . . Within the lifetime of Christendom Western Europe had been sheltered

⁵⁰ "A Coalition Of The Moral," *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 6 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/como.html> [15 May 2003]

⁵¹ "A Coalition Of The Moral," *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 6 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/como.html> [15 May 2003]

⁵² "Estonia Is Right To Support USA," *Eesti Paevaleht / BBC Monitoring*, 21 April 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/678> [15 May 2003]

⁵³ "Estonia Is Right To Support USA," *Eesti Paevaleht / BBC Monitoring*, 21 April 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/678> [15 May 2003]

from the onslaughts of the Mongols and the Turks, because Eastern Europe had taken the brunt of them; and the Tatar invasion governed the historical development of Russia as the Turkish invasion governed the historical development of the Balkans and the Danubian basin.⁵⁴

Moreover, in the first half of the twentieth century, East European nations (including Czechoslovakia and Poland) found West European nations (notably Britain and France) to be unreliable security guarantors. Eastern European nations during the interwar period lacked full independence in relation to the leading powers of the League of Nations. In Martin Wight's words,

This failure to attain effective independence was with the Eastern European states from the beginning. They had come into existence under a kind of tutelage, not only political but juridical as well. For all of them were compelled to accept international obligations, supervised by the League of Nations, for the treatment of their minorities. This system of international servitude was confined to the states of Eastern Europe. It was intensely resented, partly as an infringement of the new-won sovereignty, and particularly because the Great Powers were exempted from it.⁵⁵

How were policies concerning the Iraq crisis set in Eastern European countries? How important a place did the Iraq crisis take in Eastern European political debates? How were the Saddam Hussein regime and international terrorism seen in Eastern European countries? Were they seen as direct or indirect threats to security in Eastern Europe? To what extent does the former hegemon Russia still play a major role in the setting of security policy priorities in Eastern Europe? What are the roles of the authoritarian regime in Belarus and of the violent heritage of the Balkan region in the Eastern European security agenda?

Eastern European countries have enjoyed democracy and freedom only since the fall of Communist governments in 1989-1991, and people still remember the non-democratic regimes. Are Eastern European security policies based on values and threat assessments different from those in Western Europe? Are moral arguments more decisive

⁵⁴ Martin Wight, "Eastern Europe," in Arnold Toynbee and Frank T. Ashton-Gwatkin, eds., *The World in March 1939* (London: Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1952), p. 213.

⁵⁵ Martin Wight, "Eastern Europe," in Arnold Toynbee and Frank T. Ashton-Gwatkin, eds., *The World in March 1939* (London: Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1952), p. 236.

in Eastern Europe, at least in comparison to Western European “pacifist” or “realist” approaches? Are moral arguments especially strong in Eastern Europe regarding values such as the necessity of using force against dictatorships and the ineffectiveness of an “appeasement” policy?

According to Adrian Nastase, the Romanian Prime Minister, “For us it was important to decide not whether we were with Europe or America but what kind of values we are supporting. It was clear for us because of our background, because of our striving against dictatorship.”⁵⁶

Finally, does the disposition to support the United States derive from gratitude for recently re-obtained freedom as well as a judgment that the United States is the only reliable guarantor for Eastern European security in the event that hostile powers re-emerge? ⁵⁷

Eastern European countries currently have similar but not identical security situations. Status as a candidate, invitee or member of NATO and the EU tends to determine the security policy priorities of Eastern European countries. These countries can be divided into four groups:

- NATO members and EU invitees – the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland.
- NATO and EU invitees – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.
- NATO invitees and EU candidates – Bulgaria and Romania.
- NATO and EU candidates – Albania, Croatia, and FYROM.

Nevertheless, all of these Eastern European countries, despite their different backgrounds, came together in supporting the same position concerning relations with the United States and the U.S. policy in the Iraq crisis in 2002-2003.

⁵⁶ Adrian Nastase quoted in Stefan Wagstyl, “Romania Fears Further Transatlantic Rift,” *Financial Times*, 13 March 2003, available at <http://www.gov.ro/presa/inftari/4/revp-030313-ft-intv-an.htm> [15 May 2003]

⁵⁷ Patrick E. Tyler, “As Cold War Link Itself Grows Cold, Europe Seems To Lose Value For Bush,” *New York Times*, 12 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.html> [15 May 2003]

To clarify these countries' common features and differences in security perceptions, the specific case studies examine the policies of the following countries – Albania, Bulgaria, Latvia, and Poland. Each of these four countries represents one of the four groups noted above.

A. POLAND

Poland has made a decisive turn away from its historical security policy dilemma. The decision to align itself with Russia, Germany, or France on numerous occasions led to the loss of independence. Warsaw has now chosen reliance on the strongest country in international politics – the United States.⁵⁸ The editor in chief of Poland's *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Adam Michnik, gave the following definition of the nation's security orientation: "Poland's future is in the EU, but its security is in the United States."⁵⁹

Poland's pro-American policy orientation first attracted public attention in the second half of 2002, when Poland chose to purchase American F-16 fighter aircraft in the biggest Eastern European weapons deal to date. However, the Iraq crisis in late 2002 and early 2003 further clarified Poland's security policy priorities.

Moreover, the Polish government has emerged from the Iraq crisis as one of America's most trusted new allies in Europe.⁶⁰ Poland was entrusted with responsibility for one of the sectors in post-war Iraq. Poland's political weight has significantly increased, and it has gained in international stature as a leading power in Eastern Europe.⁶¹ With a population of about 40 million (half of the population of the ten countries that will become members of the EU in May 2004), Poland may become one of the most influential European powers. Jerzy Nowak, Poland's ambassador to NATO,

⁵⁸ "Our Take: Central Europe Rides the Tiger," *The Sarmation Review*, April 2003, Volume XXIII, No. 2 available at <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/%7Esarmatia/403/232take.html> [5 November 2003]

⁵⁹ Michnik quoted in "Poland Revives Itself As A 'Great Power'," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 22 July 2003, Volume 5, Number 27, available at http://www.taraskuzio.net/media/poland_great_power.pdf [28 November 2003]

⁶⁰ "Our Take: Central Europe Rides the Tiger," *The Sarmation Review*, April 2003, Volume XXIII, No. 2 available at <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/%7Esarmatia/403/> [5 November 2003]

⁶¹ "Poles Split Over War," *The Warsaw Voice*, 13 January 2003 available at <http://www1.warsawvoice.pl/view/995> [5 November 2003]

described the new Poland's leadership potential as follows: "For the first time in our history we will be among powers that would decide the destiny of a specific country and a specific problem."⁶²

The United States also regards Poland as one of the key players in global politics. On 30 October 2003 the U.S. Ambassador to Poland, Christopher Hill, noted that Poland "has a historical right to be a part of the decision making process that shapes the continent."⁶³ Furthermore, a statement by the President of the United States, George W. Bush, highlighted the seriousness of the maturing partnership between Poland and the United States: "Poland is the best friend of the United States in Europe."⁶⁴ Some commentators even argue that after the Iraq crisis Poland had taken the position of the most loyal and pro-American European continental country from Germany.⁶⁵

Notwithstanding the Polish fixation on the United States in security matters, Poland is also willing to serve as a bridge to mend the transatlantic rift caused by the Iraq crisis. Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski characterized this position as follows: "We are happy that today we are very close partners with the USA, but we also know the importance of Germany and France in the world."⁶⁶

On 20 March 2003, the President of Poland, Aleksander Kwasniewski, as head of the armed forces, approved the Polish army's participation in the war in Iraq. He justified this decision by noting that Iraq had refused to comply with UN Security Council

⁶² Nowak quoted in Judy Dempsey, "Poland Denies Weakening EU Common Stance On Security Policy," *Financial Times*, 6 May 2003, available at <http://www.topica.com/lists/nato1/read/message.html?sort=d&mid=907571947&start=523> [5 November 2003]

⁶³ "Ambass. Hill On U.S., Poland, Europe Partnership For Future," The United States Mission To The European Union, 30 October 2002 available at <http://www.useu.be/Categories/US&EUEnlargement/Oct3002USPolandEUHill.html> [5 November 2003]

⁶⁴ George W. Bush quoted in "Tete-a-Tete," *The Warsaw Voice*, 23 January 2003 available at <http://www1.warsawvoice.pl/view/995> [5 November 2003]

⁶⁵ Susanne Nies, "Between Chirac, Bush and Putin: the Baltic States, from Factors to Actors in the New Europe," *Baltic Defence Review*, No.9 Volume 1/2003, available at http://www.bdccl.ee/bdcol/pdf_files/bdreview/bdr-2003-9-06.pdf [25 November 2003]

Nies is a research fellow at the Center for International Studies and Research in Paris, and at the Free University of Berlin.

⁶⁶ Aleksander Kwasniewski quoted in "Poland Takes on Lead Role in Postwar Iraq," *Deutsche Welle*, 5 May 2003 available at http://www.dw-world.de/english/0,3367,1433_A_858571_1_A,00.html [5 November 2003]

Resolution 1441 and by pointing out that the coalition of willing could not “abandon moves designed to efficiently disarm Iraq.”⁶⁷

The Polish special forces unit “Grom” was the only Eastern European military unit directly involved in the combat in Iraq. Besides this commando unit, the Polish contingent included a decontamination platoon and a logistic support ship.⁶⁸

Public opinion in Poland was generally against the war in Iraq.⁶⁹ Even though the intervening powers (Australia, Britain, Poland, and the United States) asserted that their action was justified by existing UN Security Council mandates, the majority of the public still perceived it negatively. Several anti-war demonstrations took place in the major cities of Poland in February and March 2003. However, the level of participation in anti-war protests was lower than in Western European countries.⁷⁰ The active demonstrators consisted principally of people from nongovernmental organizations with leftist and pacifist orientations.⁷¹ Their main proclamation was that the Polish government had ignored the opinion of the masses that were against the war in Iraq.⁷² They condemned U.S. foreign policy as driven by economic interests⁷³ and accused the Polish government of serving as a puppet for the United States.

Nevertheless, the government’s stand on the Iraq crisis will probably not play a major role in the next elections. Events in the Middle East and the Iraq crisis debate itself

⁶⁷ Aleksander Kwasniewski quoted in Witold Żygulski, “Polish Troops Ready for War,” *The Warsaw Voice*, 20 March 2003 available at <http://www1.warsawvoice.pl/view/1702> [5 November 2003]

⁶⁸ Małgorzata Kaczorowska, “On the Front Line,” *The Warsaw Voice*, 27 March 2003 available at <http://www1.warsawvoice.pl/view/1772> [5 November 2003]

⁶⁹ “Poles Split Over War,” *The Warsaw Voice*, 13 January 2003 available at <http://www1.warsawvoice.pl/view/995> [5 November 2003]

⁷⁰ Jagoda Urban-Klaehn, “Poland, Hungary & Czech Republic versus War in Iraq,” *bellaonline.com*, 11 April 2003 available at <http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art9173.asp> [5 November 2003]

⁷¹ Małgorzata Kaczorowska, “On the Front Line,” *The Warsaw Voice*, 27 March 2003 available at <http://www1.warsawvoice.pl/view/1772> [5 November 2003]

⁷² Małgorzata Kaczorowska, “On the Front Line,” *The Warsaw Voice*, 27 March 2003 available at <http://www1.warsawvoice.pl/view/1772> [5 November 2003]

⁷³ Marcin Weber “Biggest Ever Anti-war Demo In Poland,” *Prawda.pl*, 15 February 2003 available at <http://prawda.pl/tiki-index.php?page=F15-Poland-English> [5 November 2003]

seem relatively distant and overshadowed by national issues, including high unemployment and economic changes associated with entering the EU.⁷⁴

B. LATVIA

In 2002 Latvia achieved both of its main security policy priorities – invitations to join NATO and the EU. During his post-Prague Summit visit to Lithuania the U.S. President opened a new chapter in the history of many Eastern European countries with this statement: “Our Alliance has made a solemn pledge of protection, and anyone who would choose Lithuania as an enemy has also made an enemy of the United States of America. (Applause.) In the face of aggression, the brave people of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia will never again stand alone.”⁷⁵ In the words of Stephen Larrabee, an expert with the Rand Corporation, the invitations to the alliance once and for all “help to anchor the Baltic states into the Western community and end the debate about their security orientation.”⁷⁶

Taking into account its relative geographical remoteness and small size, Latvia remains highly interested in the strategic partnership with the United States. Latvian political leaders recognize that, if the United States had not played a leading role in NATO enlargement despite Russian disapproval, the “red line” that Moscow tried to stipulate as a limit on NATO enlargement could still be drawn.⁷⁷ According to the National Defence Concept of the Republic of Latvia, “The support of the United States of America in the strengthening and achievement of the independence and security of the

⁷⁴ Scott MacMillan, “What ‘New Europe’? The Europeans Are Divided, But Not Over Iraq,” *Slate.com*, 19 February 2003 available at <http://www.cdi.org/russia/245-10.cfm> [5 November 2003]

⁷⁵ Alliance of Freedom Being Tested by “New and Terrible Dangers,” Remarks by the President to the Citizens of Vilnius, Office of the Press Secretary, 23 November 2002 available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/11/20021123-5.html> [15 November 2003]

⁷⁶ “NATO Enlargement: Qualifications & Contributions,” Hearings Of The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 3 April 2003, available at <http://www.politika.lv/index.php?id=105940&lang=lv> [15 May 2003]

⁷⁷ William Safire, “On Rewarding Friends,” *New York Times*, 3 April 2003, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/top/opinion/editorialsandoped/oped/columnists/williamsafire/index.html?offset=40> [5 May 2003]

Baltic States was and will be a deciding factor. Therefore, also in the future, co-operation with the United States of America will be one of Latvia's defence policy bilateral relation priorities.”⁷⁸

On 5 February 2003, Latvia was one of the ten Eastern European countries that announced support for the U.S. position regarding the Iraq crisis. Sandra Kalniete, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, explained the nation's position: “The Latvian public needs to understand that we cannot stand by and hope that nobody threatens us because we threaten nobody... The noble meaning of solidarity and the responsibilities of an ally become particularly understandable when one sees the unending lines of white crosses in the graveyards of fallen American soldiers in Normandy.”⁷⁹

On 20 March 2003, the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia took a decision “On the Support of the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1441.” The decision stated Latvia's readiness to assist in the international coalition's endeavors to disarm the Iraq regime.⁸⁰ The Prime Minister of Latvia, Einars Repse, stated the reason why Latvia had to be involved in the Iraq crisis in the following words: “This is an important moment for us to prove we are not a small, scared country, but one that can stand up and take part in collective international security.”⁸¹ In terms of military assistance, Latvia provided about 150 military personnel (cargo specialists, military police, unexploded ordinance experts and peacekeepers) to the post-combat rehabilitation phase in Iraq.

⁷⁸ The National Defence Concept of the Republic of Latvia is available at <http://www.mod.gov.lv/index.php?pid=1250> [15 September 2003]

⁷⁹ Sandra Kalniete, “The Challenge,” Latvian daily newspaper *Diena*, 4 February 2003, available at www.diena.lv [4 February 2003]

⁸⁰ Statement by H.E. Gints Jegermanis, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Latvia to the United Nations at the Security Council, 26 March 2003, available at <http://www.am.gov.lv/en/?id=3754> [15 May 2003]

⁸¹ Madara Licite, “Saeima must not vote for war but for peace – Repse,” Latvian Telegraph Agency, 19 March 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/baltic.html> [15 September 2003]

Despite the fact that public opinion polls indicated that about 75% of Latvians were against the war in Iraq,⁸² the Latvian government implemented its previously formulated policy. The foreign policy advisor of the Latvian Prime Minister, Solveiga Silkalna, explained to Agence France-Presse the government's position: "Our experience here (in the ex-Soviet Baltic states) means we are telling people: remember how it was for us when we were under a dictatorship. Wouldn't we have liked someone to help us."⁸³

Critics of the Latvian government's pro-American policy underlined what they deemed a lack of sufficient legal justification for the war in Iraq. They doubted the usefulness and necessity of Latvia's declared readiness to get involved in Iraq's disarmament and deplored what they considered a rushed decision that could lead to long-term entanglement in guerrilla warfare in Iraq. The protestors in the small street demonstrations in Latvia chiefly consisted of representatives from liberal cultural circles and leftist political organizations.⁸⁴

The official political opposition emphasized that the decision to actively support the United States could undermine relations with France and Germany and that the government decision had been taken in defiance of the will of the majority of the Latvian people who opposed the war in Iraq.⁸⁵

C. BULGARIA

Bulgarian public opinion on the Iraq crisis was divided. Critics of the U.S. policy opposed war against the Saddam Hussein regime and accused the Bulgarian government of blind and unconditional obedience to the world superpower. The Bulgarian president,

⁸² President of Latvia Vaira Vike-Freiberga quoted in David Sands, "Central, E. Europe To Stand With U.S.," *Washington Times*, 20 February 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/613> [15 September 2003]

⁸³ Solveiga Silkalna quoted in Janet McEvoy, "Iraq Crisis Exposes Tussle For Eastern Europe's Loyalties," Agence France-Presse, 9 February 2003 available at <http://www.topica.com/lists/nato1/read/message.html?sort=d&mid=906639228&start=438> [15 September 2003]

⁸⁴ "Pie ASV Vestniecibas proteste pret karu Iraka," Latvian Telegraph Agency, 22 March 2003, available at Latvian news portal www.tvnet.lv [22 March 2003]

⁸⁵ Latvian Social Democrat Workers Party statement against war in Iraq, 29 March 2003, available at the party home page - <http://www.socialdemokrats.lv/20030405/05.pdf> [15 October 2003]

Georgi Parvanov, denounced the possibility of war without explicit United Nations Security Council approval as a violation of international law.⁸⁶

Supporters of U.S. policy regarded the actions taken by the United States as an investment in future international stability that would benefit Bulgaria's national security. Despite some possible negative consequences, they held that Bulgaria should fully embrace the U.S. stance on the Iraq crisis.⁸⁷ The Bulgarian government emphasized the fundamental values (tyranny versus freedom) at stake and strongly supported the U. S. policy in Iraq.⁸⁸ The Foreign Minister, Solomon Passi, described this situation as follows: "just things are not always popular and popular things are not always just."⁸⁹

In March 2003 about 1,000 people went to the streets in eastern Bulgaria in an anti-war demonstration organized by the Socialist Party (the only party in parliament to oppose the government's pro-American policy).⁹⁰ Although the majority of the population opposed the war in Iraq, the nation-wide protest campaign was relatively small. The economic situation of the country, not the war in Iraq, is the central problem for many Bulgarians.⁹¹

For the practical military side, Bulgaria allowed overflight and transit rights for the U.S.-led coalition troops, provided airports for U.S. aircraft (six U.S. Air Force KC10 Extender refueling aircraft and logistic support personnel operated from the airports in Sarafovo and Burgas), and deployed its 100-member nuclear, chemical and biological

⁸⁶ "Bulgarian President Deplores US War Against Iraq," Bulgarian News Network, 20 March 2003, available at <http://www.bgnewsnet.com/story.asp?st=969> [15 September 2003]

⁸⁷ "Bulgaria's Iraq Dilemma," 2 April 2003, available at http://www.command-post.org/oped/2_archives/001347.html [15 September 2003]

⁸⁸ "Some 1,000 People Stage Anti-war Protest In Eastern Bulgaria," Bulgarian News Network, 27 March 2003, available at <http://www.bgnewsnet.com/story.asp?st=986> [15 September 2003]

⁸⁹ Solomon Passi quoted in "Foreign Minister Justifies War In Iraq," Bulgarian News Network, 4 April 2003, available at <http://www.bgnewsnet.com/story.asp?st=1025> [15 September 2003]

⁹⁰ "Some 1,000 People Stage Anti-war Protest In Eastern Bulgaria," Bulgarian News Network, 27 March 2003, available at <http://www.bgnewsnet.com/story.asp?st=986> [15 September 2003]

⁹¹ "Socialists Step Up Protest Campaign Against War In Iraq," Bulgarian News Network, 28 March 2003, available at <http://www.bgnewsnet.com/story.asp?st=989> [15 September 2003]

protection unit.⁹² During Operation Enduring Freedom U.S. transport aircraft were hosted in Bulgaria and 150 U.S. military personnel worked on the ground.⁹³

Bulgaria could also be categorized as one of the few Eastern European countries which could expect direct consequences from the war in Iraq. Because it hosted temporary U.S. military bases, the Bulgarian government had to deal with the security question of the U.S. troops. The Iraqi chargé d'affaires in Sofia, Jahia Mahdi, announced that all U.S. military bases would become targets if United States forces entered Iraq.⁹⁴ The security of the strategically significant infrastructure in Bulgaria was reinforced and security procedures around the foreign diplomatic missions were tightened as the war started.⁹⁵ Extra precautionary measures also were taken to secure the Bulgarian-Turkish border against a possible massive flow of refugees. The Interior Minister, Georgi Petkanov, characterized the security elevation process as follows: "Bulgaria has not been threatened by terrorists so far but we have taken all precautions."⁹⁶

D. ALBANIA

Despite the fact that Albania was not invited to join NATO at the Alliance's Prague Summit in November 2002, the United States undoubtedly remains Tirana's main partner in security issues.⁹⁷ The United States also has made clear that the NATO enlargement process did not end with the Prague Summit and that the Alliance's door

⁹² "Bulgarian Army Unit To Be Located in Jordan As Part of Allied Operation in Iraq," Bulgarian News Network, 4 April 2003, available at <http://www.bgnewsnet.com/story.asp?st=1033> [15 September 2003]

⁹³ "No Demand For Air Space in Attack Against Iraq Has Been Made," Sofia News Agency, 29 March 2002, available at http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=8381 [15 September 2003]

⁹⁴ "Washington Agrees to 'Buy Iraqi Debts to Bulgaria'," Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 7 March 2003, available at http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=20068 [15 September 2003]

⁹⁵ "Police Step Up Security Around Temporary U.S. Base," Bulgarian News Network, 26 March 2003, available at <http://www.bgnewsnet.com/story.asp?st=969> [15 September 2003]

⁹⁶ Georgi Petkanov quoted in "Authorities Step Up Security As War In Iraq Starts," Bulgarian News Network, 20 March 2003, available at <http://www.bgnewsnet.com/story.asp?st=936> [15 September 2003]

⁹⁷ Alban Bala, "NATO: Ambassador Says U.S. Won't Abandon Albania," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 9 October 2002 available at <http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/2002/10/09102002143538.asp> [10 October 2003]

remains open for those South-Eastern European countries that are ready to undertake the preparations necessary for membership.⁹⁸

The U.S. Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, noted that he and his Albanian counterpart had discussed “our joint interest in having Albania proceed along the path towards full NATO membership over the years ahead. In the meantime, the United States looks forward to working closely on a bilateral basis with cooperative military-to-military relationships as we work toward that end.”⁹⁹

The Albanian Defense Minister, Pandeli Majko, noted that Albania “has lined up alongside the United States in the global challenge of our times -- the fight against terrorism and the dictatorial regimes...Albania considers the full and de jure membership of our country in NATO as a priority objective, a collective aspiration, and an imminent reality as well.”¹⁰⁰

The main reason for the popularity of the United States and NATO in Albania resides in the fact that the majority of Albanians regard the United States with gratitude because of the U.S.-led 1999 NATO campaign against Yugoslav military operations against ethnic Albanians in the Serbian province of Kosovo.¹⁰¹ Consequently Albanian political parties agree that the United States is the country’s strategic partner and that NATO is the organization to secure its sovereignty.¹⁰² After having witnessed the wars in their Balkan neighborhood throughout the 1990s, Albanians esteem highly the military protection that can be offered by the United States and NATO.

⁹⁸ “U.S. Joins Albania, Croatia, Macedonia in Adriatic Charter,” Embassy Of The United States In Albania, 2 May 2003 available at <http://www.usemb-tirana.rpo.at/releases/pdfs/5.02.03AdriaticCharterSigningAlbania.pdf> [10 October 2003]

⁹⁹ Donald Rumsfeld quoted in “Rumsfeld Thanks Albania for Support in Iraq, Afghanistan,” U.S. Department of State, International Information Programs, 10 June 2003 available at <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/terror/texts/03061006.htm> [10 October 2003]

¹⁰⁰ Pandeli Majko quoted in “Secretary Rumsfeld Joint Media Availability with the Albanian Minister of Defense,” United States Department of Defense News Transcript, 10 June 2003 available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030610-secdef0262.html> [10 October 2003]

¹⁰¹ “Albania Eager To Support U.S. Effort,” Associated Press, 27 March 2003, available at http://www.sptimes.com/2003/03/27/Worldandnation/Albania_eager_to_supp.shtml [10 October 2003]

¹⁰² “Secretary Rumsfeld Joint Media Availability with the Albanian Minister of Defense,” United States Department of Defense News Transcript, 10 June 2003, available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030610-secdef0262.html> [10 October 2003]

The Albanian Minister of Defense, Pandeli Majko, characterized this Albanian attitude as follows: “The United States stood on the side of the Albanian nation in 1999, when even the existence of our nation was at stake... Our gratitude will be very lasting.”¹⁰³

The Albanian public’s perception of U.S. policy regarding the Iraq crisis is also noteworthy. Although Albania’s population is more than 70% Muslim, in contrast with many other Muslim countries, the Albanian people expressed a high level of sympathy for U.S. policy.¹⁰⁴ Albania is recognized as one of the most pro-American states in world.¹⁰⁵ In contrast with the other Eastern and Western European countries, in March 2003 there was not a single demonstration against the Iraq war in Albania.¹⁰⁶

The Albanian parliament in March 2003 approved the opening of air and naval bases for the coalition forces.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, the Albanian government sent a 70-man military unit to post-Saddam Iraq for peacekeeping activities. The Albanian armed forces have already participated in peacekeeping missions in Bosnia and Afghanistan.¹⁰⁸

E. SUMMARY

Although a majority of the Eastern Europeans opposed the U.S.-led military intervention in Iraq, many were reluctant to protest against U.S. policy, given that just a decade ago they were liberated when the United States won the Cold War. Moreover, as

¹⁰³ Pandeli Majko quoted in “Secretary Rumsfeld Joint Media Availability with the Albanian Minister of Defense,” United States Department of Defense News Transcript, 10 June 2003, available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030610-secdef0262.html> [10 October 2003]

¹⁰⁴ “Albania Eager To Support U.S. Effort,” Associated Press, 27 March 2003 available at http://www.sptimes.com/2003/03/27/Worldandnation/Albania_eager_to_supp.shtml [10 October 2003]

¹⁰⁵ “Press Release new Gallup International Post War Iraq Pool – Global Opinion from 41 countries,” Gallup International, available at <http://www.legermarketing.com/documents/TenInt/030302ENG.pdf> [10 November 2003]. The poll interviews were conducted between 16 April and 8 May 2003.

¹⁰⁶ “Albania Eager To Support U.S. Effort,” Associated Press, 27 March 2003, available at http://www.sptimes.com/2003/03/27/Worldandnation/Albania_eager_to_supp.shtml [20 October 2003]

¹⁰⁷ “Americans in Albania Excluded from Prosecution by International Criminal Court,” Westernpolicy.org, 9 May 2003, available at <http://www.westernpolicy.org/Countries.asp?Country=AL&Article=56> [20 October 2003]

¹⁰⁸ “Albania Eager To Support U.S. Effort,” Associated Press, 27 March 2003, available at http://www.sptimes.com/2003/03/27/Worldandnation/Albania_eager_to_supp.shtml [20 October 2003]

noted earlier, seven Eastern European countries were in November 2002 invited to become part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.¹⁰⁹

The traditional anti-Americanism of Western Europe is a relatively new phenomenon in Eastern Europe. The free market economy has been developing in Eastern Europe since 1989-1991, and economic growth in recent years has fostered support for the U.S. economic model. Many Eastern Europeans still see the United States as the genuine “global human rights and freedom fighter” that liberated Eastern Europe and that now is pursuing the same mission in other regions. For example, Mircea Geoana, Foreign Minister of Romania, said in September 2003 with regard to NATO that “Our task is to democratise, modernise and bring prosperity to the nations of the Middle East, Afghanistan and Central Asia.”¹¹⁰

Many people in Eastern European countries have been reluctant to get involved in a country which seems far away,¹¹¹ but many local political authorities have reminded them that the Eastern European countries themselves could be described in the same way – as suffering people in a remote area – just a decade ago. Eastern Europeans remember British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain’s abandonment of Czechoslovakia at the September 1938 Munich conference. Chamberlain told the British people:

How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks here because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing. It seems still more impossible that a quarrel which has already been settled in principle should be the subject of war.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Charles Krauthammer, “The French Challenge,” *Washington Post*, 21 February 2003, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A38121-2003Feb20?language=printer> [20 October 2003]

¹¹⁰ Mircea Geoana quoted in Guy Dinmore, “European Divisions Resurface Over Iraq Resolution,” *Financial Times*, 25 September 2003, available at <http://www.topica.com/lists/nato1/read/message.html?sort=d&mid=908690706&start=664> [28 November 2003]

¹¹¹ Laura Secor, “The Ant-Anti-American Central Europeans May Be Wary Of The Bush Administration’s War Plans, But They’re Not At All Wary Of The United States,” *The Boston Globe*, 3 March 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/624> [20 April 2003]

¹¹² “Neville Chamberlain, national broadcast, London, September 27, 1938.—Chamberlain, *In Search of Peace*, p. 174 (1939),” *Respectfully Quoted: A Dictionary of Quotations*., 1989, available at <http://www.bartleby.com/73/2050.html> [20 October 2003]

The bottom-line is that Eastern Europeans judge that the United States won the Cold War, liberated Eastern Europe from Soviet tutelage, and laid the foundations for a future Europe – whole and free.¹¹³

Therefore, in Eastern Europe strong anti-Americanism remains a feature of the politically extreme left (including the communists) and of the extreme right (various nationalists). Furthermore, for many Eastern European countries the prospect of France and Germany expanding their influence in Europe is of much greater concern than U.S. unilateralist trends in world affairs.¹¹⁴

Although a majority of the public in Eastern Europe opposed the looming war in Iraq in March 2003, when millions of people marched through the streets of Western European cities, only hundreds protested against the coming war in Iraq in the Eastern European capitals.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Martin Palous, “All Too Familiar With Dictators,” *Washington Post*, 5 March 2003, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A42845-2003Mar4?language=printer> [20 April 2003] Martin Palous is the ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States.

¹¹⁴ Laura Secor, “The Anti-Anti-Americans: Central Europeans May Be Wary Of The Bush Administration’s War Plans, But They’re Not At All Wary Of The United States,” *The Boston Globe*, 3 March 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/624> [20 April 2003]

¹¹⁵ Andrew Higgins, “New Europe’ Wary of U.S., Too --- Though Officials Back Washington on Iraq, Citizenry Doesn’t,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 18 March 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbmar03.html> [20 April 2003]

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IV. IMPLICATIONS OF EASTERN EUROPEAN POSITIONS CONCERNING THE IRAQ CRISIS

A. TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

NATO has successfully survived many crises – the Anglo-French attempt to seize the Suez Canal in 1956, France’s withdrawal from NATO’s integrated military structure in 1966 (and the simultaneous relocation of the U.S. forces and the NATO headquarters), and the controversy concerning U.S. intermediate-range missiles in Europe in the early 1980s. The recent disputes have much to do not only with the Iraq crisis, but also with the future of NATO.¹¹⁶

To what extent could the Iraq crisis and the disputes between the United Kingdom and the United States on one side, and France and Germany on the other, directly or indirectly jeopardize the credibility and future of the two international organizations – NATO and the EU – which are the main priorities of the Eastern European countries’ security policies?

1. The Article 5 Controversy

For the Eastern European countries NATO’s assistance to Turkey in the Iraq crisis was of major importance. The Eastern European countries are interested in not allowing any flexible interpretation of Articles 4 and 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Any loose interpretation set by unwise precedents would mean a decrease of the Eastern European countries’ confidence in their security. It should be recalled that Article 4 concerns security consultations and that Article 5 consists of the mutual defense pledge of the Allies.

4. The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened.

¹¹⁶ Barry Renfrew, “NATO Will Survive Iraq Crisis, Although Weaker And Less United, Analysts Say,” *Canadian Press*, 12 February 2003, available at http://quickstart.clari.net/qs_se/webnews/wed/ax/Anato_s-future.RkFi_DFC.html [20 April 2003]

5. The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.¹¹⁷

As Nikolas Gvosdev, the editor of *In The National Interest*, has asked, “If some members of the alliance balk at providing assistance to a fellow ally who feels itself to be under threat, in this case from Iraq, are the Article 4 and 5 guarantees really worth the parchment on which they are written?”¹¹⁸

Events associated with Turkey’s request for NATO support sent significant signals to Eastern European countries already in NATO and to other countries in Eastern Europe.

According to Ernest Skalski, the leading political and economic commentator for Poland’s *Gazeta Wyborcza*, “And particularly unacceptable is a situation where Turkey, a NATO member, asks for support provided for in the NATO treaty and does not receive such support immediately and without any pre-conditions from all other members.”¹¹⁹ In the event, the assistance for Turkey was approved on 16 February 2003 by NATO’s Defense Planning Committee, a body in which France chooses not to participate. Lord Robertson commented that “we would have preferred to have a decision by the North Atlantic Council with all 19 members present. France is by its own choice not a member of the integrated military structure, and therefore not a member of the Defence Planning

¹¹⁷ The North Atlantic Treaty is available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/txt/treaty.htm> [20 October 2003]

¹¹⁸ Nikolas Gvosdev, “NATO: Marching To Irrelevance?”, *In The National Interest*, 12 February 2003, <http://www.inthenationalinterest.com/Articles/vol2issue6/vol2issue6gvosdev.html> [20 April 2003]

¹¹⁹ Ernest Skalski, “Saddam Can Only Be Disarmed By Force And Poland Should Participate In The War,” *Polish News Bulletin / Gazeta Wyborcza*, 27 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/ncdbfeb03.html> [20 April 2003]

Committee....But today was a remarkable day with an important decision and a very firm and clear signal by the Alliance that we will stand by an Ally if that Ally is under threat.”¹²⁰

If an Ally that feels threatened receives commitments from NATO only after such an arrangement is made, the question of NATO’s credibility as a collective defense institution arises. The Alliance successfully guarded Western Europe from Soviet invasion during the Cold War based on the credibility of NATO’s Article 5 obligations.¹²¹

Furthermore, some Eastern Europeans have expressed concern that, if France or Germany can veto NATO planning for assistance to Turkey, it is possible that the response to a potential Russian threat to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania or Poland could be even more reserved.¹²²

Turkey’s request for consultations in accordance with Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty was appropriate, because Article 4 is meant for use in exactly such crises. The consultation and mutual defense obligations are the fundamental reasons why Eastern European countries applied for NATO membership. If some Western European officials said that a prompt resort to Article 4 or 5 could send an undesirable message implying an irrevocable decision on war, and then denied use of air space and military installations for the potential support of the threatened country, Eastern European countries might feel that they could be left again to count on solely their own military strength.¹²³

¹²⁰ Statement by NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson after the NATO Defence Planning Committee Meeting on 16 February 2003, available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2003/s030216a.htm> [20 September 2003]

¹²¹ Mart Laar, “New Europe Won’t ‘Keep Quiet’ Until All Europe Is New,” *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 19 February 2003, available at http://www.aei.org/research/nai/news/newsID.16116.projectID.11/news_detail.asp [20 May 2003]. Mart Laar is the former prime minister of Estonia.

¹²² Janusz Bugajski, “Bipolar Europe,” *Washington Times*, 17 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.html> [20 April 2003] or http://www.csis.org/oped/2003/02/17/bipolar_europe.htm [20 April 2003]. Janusz Bugajski is the director of East European Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

¹²³ Bartłomiej Sienkiewicz, “Gov’t Must Stop Acting As If Geopolitical Realities Were Unchanged,” *Rzeczpospolita/ Polish News Bulletin*, 14 February 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/612> [20 April 2003]

2. NATO “Out of Area Operations”

The present events in post-war Iraq indicate the willingness of most Eastern European countries to take an active part in the peacekeeping mission in Iraq. This trend may promote the further expansion of NATO power projection towards operations focused on the Middle East and Central Asia (Afghanistan). This new direction could be especially highlighted with NATO’s positive response to Poland’s request for assistance in activities in its sector in Iraq. Similarly, since the mid-1990s all Eastern European countries have taken part in the peacekeeping missions in the Balkans. Since December 2001 several Eastern European countries have participated in the peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan, which have been officially led by NATO since August 2003.¹²⁴ Eastern European countries seem to be comparatively eager to participate in NATO “out of area” operations, and this factor may influence the further options of transforming NATO.

3. NATO Involvement in Stabilizing Non-NATO Eastern Europe

The membership of additional Eastern European countries in NATO may necessitate a new strategic agenda for this region. The purpose would be to ensure that the United States remains engaged in this region and that the credibility of Article 5 commitments is strengthened. Eastern European observers are concerned that the United States, being deeply involved in serious confrontations in the Middle East and East Asia, might decide to reduce its level of security cooperation with Eastern Europe.¹²⁵

NATO’s Eastern European countries can contribute to U.S. and NATO policies to improve the political situations in unstable regions through endeavors to stabilize and

¹²⁴ The following countries have contributed to the International Security Assistance Force: Albania, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States (as of 11 August 2003), available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2003/08-august/e0811a.htm> [28 November 2002]

¹²⁵ Stephen Larrabee, RAND Senior Staff Member in “NATO Enlargement: Qualifications & Contributions, Hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee,” 3 April 2003, available at <http://www.politika.lv/index.php?id=105940&lang=lv> [20 May 2003]

cooperate with neighboring countries in non-NATO Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Russia, with special attention to the Kaliningrad region.¹²⁶

After the Eastern European countries invited to join NATO at the Prague Summit gain full membership in the alliance in May 2004, one of the main future strategic tasks for these countries may well become the movement of the security zone further east, although this would not necessarily mean expanding membership in NATO. With NATO able to protect more countries directly and indirectly to the east, all present and prospective NATO members, including those in Eastern Europe, will feel more secure. The potential zone of instability will no longer be located directly at their borders. Good bilateral and multilateral defense cooperation programs among NATO and non-NATO Eastern European countries already exist.

For example, just as Germany in the mid 1990s pushed for the accession of Poland to NATO, now Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia will push for a more important NATO role in relations with Belarus and Ukraine. Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania will strongly support NATO cooperation programs regarding Moldova and the Balkans. All of these countries are also interested in contributing to the improvement of the security situation in the Caucasus. This strategy coincides with the EU, NATO and U.S. policies favoring stabilization of the Eastern European peripheries.¹²⁷

4. NATO Eastern European Military Capabilities

Presently the military role of Eastern European countries in world affairs is quite restricted. For example, all the Eastern European countries combined could not provide military peacekeeping capabilities similar to those which Germany alone provided in Afghanistan. Germany and France are each militarily more advanced and capable than all

¹²⁶ "NATO Enlargement: Qualifications & Contributions," Hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee," 3 April 2003, available at <http://www.politika.lv/index.php?id=105940&lang=lv> [20 May 2003]

¹²⁷ "A Coalition Of The Moral," *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 6 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/como.html> [20 May 2003]

of the Eastern European countries together. Poland will manage one of the sectors in post-war Iraq, but a major part of the cost related to troop maintenance in this sector will be covered by the United States.¹²⁸

From the military point of view Eastern European countries offer a variety of relatively small and specialized niche contributions: chemical and biological protection units, peacekeeping, military police units, special operations forces, demining and explosive ordnance disposal units.¹²⁹

However, the United States is willing to intensify its political and military cooperation with the Eastern European countries in the post-Iraq war era. According to Krzysztof Bobinski, the editor of a Polish magazine on European integration, “The Americans have made a big effort to demonstrate that close links to them are easier, safer, more secure. That America can be relied on.”¹³⁰

Moreover, in the view of John Hulsman, a European policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, “A lot of people here are looking for ways to help those countries that came along with us.... There’s brainstorming about how to help them [the Eastern European countries] – diplomatically and economically.”¹³¹

Time will show how well-founded is the noteworthy judgment that “In the place of Germany and France, Mr. Bush has reached out to countries like Poland and Spain.”¹³²

¹²⁸ Poland has asked the United States to cover two-thirds of the Polish troops cost (about 90 million \$). Paul Ames, “NATO to Help Polish Peacekeepers in Iraq, available at Unanimous Decision Eases Wartime Rift,” Associated Press, 21 May 2003 available at <http://www.expandnato.org/polandiraq.html> [7 June 2003]

¹²⁹ “NATO And Enlargement: Progress Since Prague,” Hearing Before The Subcommittee On Europe Of The Committee On International Relations House Of Representatives, 29 April 2003, available at http://www.house.gov/international_relations/108/86774.PDF [5 May 2003] and http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intlrel/hfa86774.000/hfa86774_0.HTM [7 June 2003]. See also Vladimir Socor, “Better Than ‘Seven Belgiums’,” *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 7- 9 February 2003, available at http://www.israeleconomy.org/eng_editor/wallstreet.php?article_id=160 [20 April 2003]

¹³⁰ Krzysztof Bobinski quoted in Janet McEvoy, “Iraq Crisis Exposes Tussle For Eastern Europe’s Loyalties,” Agence France-Presse, 9 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.html> [20 April 2003]

¹³¹ John Hulsman quoted in Michael Tarm, “Eastern Europeans Set To Reap Benefits Of Supporting U.S. Stance on Iraq,” Associated Press, 29 April 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/682> [20 May 2003]

¹³² Patrick E. Tyler, “As Cold War Link Itself Grows Cold, Europe Seems To Lose Value For Bush,” *New York Times*, 12 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.html> [20 April 2003]

The answer will depend not only on the policies and capabilities of the Eastern European countries, but also on the development of relations between the Western European countries and the United States.

Nevertheless some trends can be noted regarding relations between Eastern European countries and the United States. Obviously, the crisis over Iraq in late 2002/early 2003 was profound, and the political and military consequences are expected to be significant. The Eastern European governments have spoken in support of U.S. policy, and the United States has taken the message seriously. U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has noted that, "If you look at the entire NATO Europe today, the center of gravity is shifting to the east."¹³³

From a long-term strategic planning perspective the United States must try to seriously assist the development of Eastern European military capabilities over the next decade, if the U.S. government has decided to devote more attention to Eastern European countries. In the view of the Janusz Bugajski, the director of East European Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, only in that case could Eastern European countries form a kind of alternative to France and Germany.¹³⁴ An example of such long-term strategic calculations may be evident in the U.S. government's political and financial support for the Polish purchase of F-16 fighter aircraft.¹³⁵

It is significant in this regard that the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Latvia, Girts Valdis Kristovskis, declared that "it is clear that Latvia and the other Baltic States need a special support program to modernize our weapons and equipment to the

¹³³ United States Department of Defense, News Transcript, Presenter: Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, 22 January 2003, Secretary Rumsfeld Briefs at the Foreign Press Center, available at http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jan2003/t01232003_t0122sdfpc.html [20 April 2003]

¹³⁴ Janusz Bugajski, "Bipolar Europe," *Washington Times*, 17 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.html> [20 April 2003] or <http://www.csis.org/opeds/> [20 April 2003]

¹³⁵ Poland ordered 48 fighter jets from the U.S. company Lockheed Martin for \$ 3.5 billion, with the principal payments not due until after 2010. Lockheed Martin's F-16 proposal outbid proposals for the French Mirage 2000 and the Swedish-British Gripen fighter. The purchase agreement also includes U.S. compensation investments in Poland's economy of \$ 7.5 billion over 10 years.

Beata Pasek, "Poland Shrugs Off EU Criticism For Signing Landmark Deal To Purchase U.S.-Made F-16s," Associated Press, 22 April 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbapr03.html> [25 May 2003] and John Tagliabue, "Lockheed Wins Huge Sale To Poland With Complex Deal," *New York Times*, 19 April 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbapr03.html> [25 May 2003]

highest current standards. It is impossible to think that we will be able to participate in military operations with antiquated weapons and military transport!”¹³⁶

If uncooperative relations between the United States on one side and France and Germany on the other side continued in the post-Iraq crisis era, the United States might seriously reconsider its plans and redirect resources and attention to the new allies elsewhere in Europe.¹³⁷

The partial redeployment of U.S. troops from Western Europe to Eastern Europe would strengthen the Eastern European security situation, military capabilities, and defense infrastructure¹³⁸ while also promoting economic development.¹³⁹ Furthermore, the establishment of U.S. military bases in Eastern Europe would offer an extra guarantee of the allies’ protection provided by the North Atlantic Treaty. Such bases would have political as well as military value in that they could not be easily removed from Eastern Europe.¹⁴⁰

The problem that revealed itself during the U.S. preparations for Operation Iraqi Freedom when the United States could not use military installations in Turkey also has consequences for Eastern Europe’s strategic position. Eastern European countries could provide attractive alternatives in strategically relevant locations, with fewer risks of possible vetoes as a result of serious political backlashes. Military bases, airfields and seaports in Eastern Europe (especially in Bulgaria and Romania) could enable U.S. forces

¹³⁶ Minister of Defence G.V.Kristovskis’ Speech to the conference “Reinventing global security,” 11 June 2003, available at <http://www.mod.gov.lv/index.php?pid=1236166> [15 June 2003]

¹³⁷ State Department spokesman Richard Boucher in “U.S. Says 'No Formal Proposals' Yet For Troop Redeployment In Europe,” *Agence France-Presse*, 3 February 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/624> [20 April 2003]

¹³⁸ Janusz Bugajski, “Bipolar Europe,” *Washington Times*, 17 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.html> [25 May 2003] or <http://www.csis.org/opeds/> [25 May 2003]

¹³⁹ Michael Tarm, “Eastern Europeans Set To Reap benefits Of Supporting U.S. Stance on Iraq,” Associated Press, 29 April 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/682> [20 May 2003]

¹⁴⁰ William Pfaff, “U.S. to Europe: ‘Who Wants Allies?’ Trans-Atlantic Angst,” *International Herald Tribune*, 27 April 2003, available at <http://www.iht.com/articles/94462.html> [20 May 2003]

to monitor international developments and rapidly intervene, if necessary, in the Caucasus, Asia and the Middle East.¹⁴¹

Finally, what could be a better impetus to move U.S. troops eastward than the fact that preceding and during the Iraq crisis Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania allowed U.S. forces to make their preparations or directly operate from bases on their soil?¹⁴²

While no final decisions have been made, many officials and experts expect U.S. troops to eventually shift eastwards. According to General James Jones, Commander of the U.S. European Command, “The NATO center of activities is now moving to Eastern Europe.... The United States must reconsider their strategy in light of the new allies.”¹⁴³

5. U.S. – Eastern European Relations

Before the NATO enlargement plan was announced in Prague in November 2002, skeptics warned that a “big bang” expansion would bring to NATO a number of countries that would be strategically irrelevant, unable and reluctant to participate in NATO operations, and “freeriders” in defense spending. Events in NATO regarding the Iraq crisis proved, however, that Eastern European countries do not undermine NATO’s internal political cohesion and do not jeopardize the development of NATO antiterrorism policies.¹⁴⁴ The opposition of Belgium, France and Germany in January-February 2003 to beginning planning for some limited defensive measures to protect Turkey dismissed any doubt concerning the future reliability of the seven Eastern European countries invited to join NATO. The Eastern European countries behaved like de facto NATO members, and their consistent pro-American positions even helped NATO to avoid

¹⁴¹ Harry Sterling, “U.S. Angers Old Friends, Makes New Ones. Romania Steps Up After Turkey Throws Wrench Into War Plans,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, 1 April 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbapr03.html> [20 May 2003]

¹⁴² Michael Tarm, “Eastern Europeans Set To Reap benefits Of Supporting U.S. Stance on Iraq,” Associated Press, 29 April 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/682> [20 May 2003]

¹⁴³ Jones quoted in “NATO focus moving eastward, Allied Commander says,” Agence France-Presse, 5 August 2003, available at http://www.csees.net/topicnews1_more.php3?nId=159 [28 November 2003]

¹⁴⁴ Vladimir Socor, “Better Than ‘Seven Belgiums’,” *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 7-9 February 2003, available at http://www.israeleconomy.org/eng_editor/wallstreet.php?article_id=160 [20 April 2003]

further gaps in cohesion.¹⁴⁵ The U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO, Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns, expressed confidence regarding the seven Eastern European countries invited to join NATO. In his view, they “would have supported aid to Turkey if they had been part of the deliberations. I would have liked to have had them at the table with us that week.”¹⁴⁶

The argument that the Eastern European countries supported the U.S. position because of the possibility that the U.S. Senate might block the ratification of NATO enlargement is invalid.¹⁴⁷ First, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland have been members of NATO since 1999. Second, the U.S. Senate on 7 May 2003 ratified the accession of the seven new NATO member states, but all Eastern European countries have continued to support the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq.

Of course, the Eastern European countries’ pro-American stance regarding the Iraq crisis facilitated the U.S. Senate’s decision to approve NATO membership for seven additional countries.¹⁴⁸ These countries were seen in a new light as valuable allies for the United States in world politics. During the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings the implications of NATO’s eastward enlargement were characterized in a positive manner:

- When this country needed support last winter for its Iraq policy, all of these countries signed a statement of support for the transatlantic relationship, despite considerable pressure against them from France and others.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Vladimir Socor, “Better Than ‘Seven Belgiums’,” *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 7-9 February 2003, available at http://www.israeleconomy.org/eng_editor/wallstreet.php?article_id=160 [20 April 2003]

¹⁴⁶ Testimony By Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns, U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO, on the Future Of NATO To The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 1 April 2003, available at <http://foreign.senate.gov/hearings/BurnsTestimony030401.pdf> [20 May 2003]

¹⁴⁷ Judy Dempsey, “Europe Unable To Hide Depth Of Disunity On Iraq Policy,” *Financial Times*, 25 February 2003, available at <http://www.xak.com/main/newsshow.asp?id=20079> [20 April 2003]

¹⁴⁸ Michael Tarm, “Eastern Europeans Set To Reap benefits Of Supporting U.S. Stance on Iraq,” Associated Press, 29 April 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/682> [20 April 2003]

¹⁴⁹ Senator Joseph Biden (D – Delaware), quoted in “U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Approves 7 New NATO Countries,” Agence France-Presse, 30 April 2003, available at <http://www.baf1.com/newsDetail.asp?idNews=29> [15 May 2003]

- They've acted as de facto allies. In fact they've acted as better allies than some of the members that are currently in NATO.¹⁵⁰
- They will be among our most committed allies when they walk through NATO's doors as full members.¹⁵¹

The unanimous vote by the U.S. Senate in support of NATO's further enlargement to Eastern Europe at a time when some Members of Congress are questioning NATO's future as such shows that Eastern European countries are regarded as significant contributors to the Alliance in the eyes of Americans – bringing the Alliance strong values, extra troops¹⁵² and potentially new bases for U.S. and other NATO forces.¹⁵³ In the words of Ambassador Nicholas Burns, “They don't just bring new capabilities to the table; they also bring strong political will to defend our way of life.... Size and geography and population count less than the political will to defend our principles and collective security.”¹⁵⁴

Although Eastern European countries may have had limited military significance in the Iraq crisis, these Eastern European countries gave the United States badly needed political capital.¹⁵⁵ The United States highly appreciates the support given by Eastern

¹⁵⁰ Senator George Voinovich (R-Ohio), quoted in Ken Guggenheim, “U.S. Senate Approves NATO Enlargement, Asks To Review Consensus Policy,” Associated Press, 8 May 2003, available at http://www27.brinkster.com/licenta/fise.rez.det.asp?art_id=399 [15 May 2003]

¹⁵¹ Testimony By Ambassador Nicholas Burns, U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO, on the Future Of NATO To The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 1 April 2003, available at <http://foreign.senate.gov/hearings/BurnsTestimony030401.pdf> [20 April 2003]

¹⁵² The current round of NATO enlargement brings 200,000 troops to the alliance and specialized capabilities used in the operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq and to be further developed according to the Prague Capabilities Commitment.

Source: Secretary of State Colin Powell, “An Enlarged NATO: Mending Fences and Moving Forward on Iraq,” Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC, 29 April 2003, available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2003/20045.htm> [20 May 2003]

¹⁵³ Ken Guggenheim, “U.S. Senate Approves NATO Enlargement, Asks To Review Consensus Policy,” Associated Press, 8 May 2003, available at http://www27.brinkster.com/licenta/fise.rez.det.asp?art_id=399 [20 May 2003]

¹⁵⁴ Testimony By Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns, U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO, on the Future Of NATO To The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 1 April 2003, available at <http://foreign.senate.gov/hearings/BurnsTestimony030401.pdf> [20 May 2003]

¹⁵⁵ Michael Adler, “Former Communist Eastern Europe Gives US Political, Not Military Punch,” Agence France-Presse, 13 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.html> [20 April 2003]

European countries, especially because these Eastern European countries constituted as a recently democratized and progressive bloc unanimously supporting the U.S. policy in the Iraq crisis.¹⁵⁶

In May 2003, the President of the United States expressed gratitude to Eastern European countries for their support. “In the battle of Iraq, central and eastern European countries have stood with America and our coalition to end a grave threat to peace, and to rid Iraq of a brutal, brutal regime.”¹⁵⁷ The U.S. public opinion polls showed that Eastern European support for the U.S. actions was welcomed. The Eastern European countries’ pro-American positions definitely helped the formation of the United States-led international coalition of the willing.¹⁵⁸

The Eastern European countries want to be viewed as nations that revitalize NATO and transatlantic relations, and that better equip the Alliance to deal with traditional and new dangers.

During the 2002-2003 Iraq crisis, all the Eastern European countries which have already been invited to join NATO or which are still in NATO aspirant status wanted to demonstrate that they are “de facto Allies” in the war on terror by making serious contributions to Operation Enduring Freedom and the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. Moreover, Eastern European countries showed their military value by allowing the United States to use their airspace and military bases and by contributing forces to the U.S.-led international post-conflict reconstruction coalition in Iraq. According to Ian Brzezinski, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for European and NATO Affairs, “They have demonstrated by risking their own blood that they not only understand the responsibility of NATO membership, they embrace it.”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Steven Komarow, “East Europeans Now Key To U.S. Military Looking In New Directions,” *USA Today*, 3 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.html> [20 April 2003]

¹⁵⁷ Bush quoted in Jean-Louis Doublet, “NATO Expansion Illustrates U.S. Geostrategy For Europe,” *Agence France-Presse*, 9 May 2003, available at http://www.csees.net/topicnews1_more.php3?nId=154 [20 November 2003]

¹⁵⁸ Vladimir Socor, “Better Than ‘Seven Belgiums’,” *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 7- 9 February 2003, available at http://www.israeleconomy.org/eng_editor/wallstreet.php?article_id=160 [20 April 2003]

¹⁵⁹ Ian Brzezinski, “NATO And Enlargement: Progress Since Prague,”

Through their support for the U.S. position in the Iraq crisis, Albania, Croatia and FYROM have fortified their prospects for membership in NATO.¹⁶⁰

B. EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

The exchanges of highly negative rhetoric between France and Germany on one side and Eastern European countries on the other side started on 17 February 2003 when the President of France, Jacques Chirac, warned the Eastern European countries that support for the U.S. position on the Iraq crisis could put in jeopardy their chances of joining the EU.

To quote Chirac, “that isn’t very responsible behaviour.... So I believe they have missed a good opportunity to remain silent.”¹⁶¹ Chirac added that ratification of the December 2002 EU Copenhagen Summit decision to invite 10 new countries would depend on the parliaments of the present 15 EU countries.

Bulgaria and Rumania, because of their later prospects for EU membership and the Bulgarian role in the United Nations Security Council, received the most severe critique. Jacques Chirac declared that “Romania and Bulgaria were particularly irresponsible to get involved in that when their position is already very delicate with respect to Europe. If they wanted to reduce their chances of joining Europe, they couldn’t find a better way.”¹⁶²

Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Europe of the Committee on International Relations, House Of Representatives, 29 April 2003, available at http://www.house.gov/international_relations/108/86774.PDF [15 May 2003] and http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intlrel/hfa86774.000/hfa86774_0.HTM [15 May 2003]

¹⁶⁰ Secretary Colin Powell, “An Enlarged NATO: Mending Fences and Moving Forward on Iraq,” Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC, 29 April 2003, available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2003/20045.htm> [20 May 2003]

¹⁶¹ Extraordinary European Council - Press conference given by Jacques Chirac, President of the Republic (excerpts); in Brussels on 17 February 2003; “Situation In Iraq”, Published by Embassy of France in the United States – 20 February 2003, available at http://www.info-france-usa.org/news/statmnts/2003/chirac_eurocouncil.asp [20 May 2003]

¹⁶² Extraordinary European Council - Press conference given by Jacques Chirac, President of the Republic (excerpts); in Brussels on 17 February 2003; “Situation In Iraq”, Published by Embassy of France in the United States – 20 February 2003, available at http://www.info-france-usa.org/news/statmnts/2003/chirac_eurocouncil.asp [20 May 2003]

The chairman of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, Elmar Brok of Germany's Christian Democrat Union, made a direct link between EU accession perspectives and the Eastern European countries' stands regarding the Iraq crisis by stating that the Eastern European countries "had prematurely rallied to the U.S. position in the Iraqi crisis: by disregarding EU positions, they could endanger their accession into the Union."¹⁶³

Former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the chairman of the EU Convention on the future of Europe, also addressed the Eastern European countries with a critical remark, noting "that the Maastricht treaty calls for EU member countries to support without reservation the EU joint foreign policy."¹⁶⁴

The immediate reactions in Eastern European countries to the comments made by the President of France and other French and German leaders were straightforward and harsh. It should be taken into account that language in Euro-Atlantic relations at that time was inconsistent with diplomatic etiquette. The Eastern European countries' critical responses varied from affirmations of national sovereignty and independence to denial of any connections between the crisis in Iraq and the EU enlargement process, as the following examples suggest:

- We will speak when we consider it appropriate and we will say what we consider appropriate.¹⁶⁵
- We did stick our neck out, and we will not pull it back...My predecessor in 1939 hoped to keep a low profile, and it didn't work.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Elmar Brok quoted in indirect discourse by Janusz Bugajski, "Bipolar Europe," *Washington Times*, 17 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbfeb03.html> [20 April 2003] or <http://www.csis.org/opeds/> [20 April 2003]

¹⁶⁴ Valéry Giscard d'Estaing quoted in Janusz Bugajski, "Bipolar Europe," *Washington Times*, 17 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbfeb03.html> [20 April 2003] or <http://www.csis.org/opeds/> [20 April 2003]

¹⁶⁵ Poland's prime minister, Leszek Miller quoted in "Emerging European Democracies Sound Off," Associated Press, 24 February 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/618> [20 April 2003]

¹⁶⁶ President of Latvia Vaira Vike-Freiberga quoted in "Vaira Vike-Freiberga – The New Voice Of 'New Europe,'" Stratfor.com, 4 March 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/627> [20 April 2003]

- I am surprised to find a connection being made between positions on Iraq and membership talks with the EU. Entry talks are held under strictly set rules announced in advance.¹⁶⁷
- We expect that each country be judged according to its own accomplishments and not according to its position on one or another global issue.¹⁶⁸
- The last time we were told that [to keep quiet], it was from ... the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁹

Moreover, it should be noted that no “EU joint foreign policy” or “EU position” concerning the Iraq crisis existed formally prior to the EU summit in Brussels on 17 February 2003. Several established European Union member states, including Britain, Italy, and Spain, opposed the policy of France and Germany regarding the Iraq crisis. The opinions of the French and German politicians represented their personal or national views regarding the Iraq crisis, not a unanimous EU position. As a Slovak Foreign Ministry spokesman noted, “The EU candidates had no chance to have the same stance as the EU, because the Union itself had not agreed on a common position until yesterday [17 February 2003]”.¹⁷⁰

The Eastern European countries invited to join the EU welcomed the fact that the EU had found common language to address the Iraq crisis. However, this common EU position was the due paid to keep the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy afloat. The differences in the EU countries’ positions concerning the Iraq crisis persisted after this vaguely worded common view of the EU was approved.

¹⁶⁷ European Integration Minister of Bulgaria, Meglena Kuneva quoted in Sean Maguire, “We Won’t Shut Up, Mr Chirac, Says East Europe,” Reuters, 18 February 2003, available at http://www.revue-politique.com/0_us_review.htm [20 April 2003] or <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.html> [20 April 2003]

¹⁶⁸ Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov quoted in Associated Press “Bulgaria, Romania Urge West To Ignore Split Over Iraq When Judging NATO, EU Applicants,” 14 April 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbapr03.html> [15 May 2003]

¹⁶⁹ Ojars Kalnins, former Latvian Ambassador in the United States, quoted in James Morrison, “Sit Down And Shut Up: Former Latvian Ambassador To U.S. Shocked By French Remarks,” *Washington Times / Embassy Row*, 13 March 2003, available at <http://www.baf1.com/newsDetail.asp?idNews=22> [15 May 2003]

¹⁷⁰ Slovak Foreign Ministry spokesman Boris Gandel quoted in Sean Maguire, “We Won’t Shut Up, Mr Chirac, Says East Europe,” Reuters, 18 February 2003, available at http://www.revue-politique.com/0_us_review.htm [20 April 2003] or <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.html> [20 April 2003]

British Prime Minister Tony Blair was the first EU member state leader who expressed support to the Eastern European countries for taking a pro-American position regarding the Iraq crisis. “The candidate states have the same right to present their position as the UK or France. I hope no one is trying to suggest they should not receive full rights in the EU, including the right to present their views.”¹⁷¹

U.S. President George W. Bush pointed out during a speech in Poland on 31 May 2003: “You have not come all this way, through occupations and tyranny and brave uprisings, only to be told that you must now choose between Europe and America.”¹⁷²

After the initial exchanges, mutual respect and constructive dialogue were restored. For example, Polish Defense Minister Jerzy Szmajdzinski announced that “The EU and NATO have seen divisions. The first conclusion that has to be drawn is: don't put oil on the fire, and contain the rhetoric.” Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski described the situation simply: “This is a nervous time...Europe, NATO, the world needs cooperation, not divisions.”¹⁷³

The German Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer, was the first statesman from France or Germany who tried to calm down the rhetoric concerning the Iraq crisis. In Fischer's words, “I fully understand the reaction of Central European countries that survived 50 years of Soviet occupation and have a different attitude towards the United States. We have to overcome the differences of opinion.”¹⁷⁴ German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder added: “It is possible for friends to have different points of view.”¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Tony Blair quoted in “Chirac Lambasting Prompts Sharp Reactions In Poland And Other Candidate Countries,” *Polish News Bulletin*, 20 February 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/610> [5 May 2003]

¹⁷² Bush quoted in “Bush: 'No U.S.-Europe conflict',” CNN.com, 31 May 2003 available at <http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/europe/05/31/bush.europe1100/> [28 November 2003]

¹⁷³ Aleksander Kwasniewski quoted in Janet McEvoy, “Poland Rejects French Criticism,” Agence France-Presse, 18 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbfeb03.html> [5 May 2003]

¹⁷⁴ Joschka Fischer statement in Brussels on 29 February 2003, quoted in Alexandra Richie, “New Europeans Know Who Their Allies Are,” *National Post*, 6 March 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/630> [5 May 2003]

¹⁷⁵ Gerhard Schroeder quoted in Agence France-Presse, “Iraq crisis will not harm German-Latvian ties: Schroeder,” 17 March 2003 <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbmar17.html> [5 May 2003]

NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson summarized one of the lessons of the dispute as follows: “You get the sensation at times that people expect NATO to behave like in the Warsaw Pact, where someone in Moscow or Washington decides and everyone falls in line...NATO’s not the Warsaw Pact.... Differences are the lifeblood of democracy.”¹⁷⁶

It seems that due to Germany’s geopolitical position maintaining good relations with the Eastern European countries is more important for Berlin than it is for Paris. With the emotional rhetoric caused by the Iraq crisis falling, Germany rapidly took action to restore the crisis-damaged links with neighboring Eastern European countries.

Before the Iraq crisis the EU’s eastward enlargement was seen as an important national interest of Germany, a step that would strengthen Berlin’s position in Europe. According to Jacek Rostowski, a professor of economics at the Central European University in Budapest, with the Iraq crisis this perception in Germany has diminished.¹⁷⁷

Germany has been the biggest source of foreign investments in Eastern European countries; and for various geographical, political, and economic reasons Germany has been a major champion of Eastern European countries gaining EU membership.¹⁷⁸ However, at least for now, Germany has diminished its reputation as the main advocate of the EU’s eastern enlargement.¹⁷⁹

France and Germany unquestionably have been the driving force behind EU enlargement. They have invested substantial political and economic resources in this process. In short, France and Germany have never seriously placed the enlargement of the EU into doubt. This did not even take place in the heat of the Iraq crisis quarrels.

¹⁷⁶ Lord Robertson quoted in Michael Tarm, “Iraq Divisions Won’t Undermine NATO Or Delay Enlargement, Robertson Says,” Associated Press, 24 March 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/643> [5 May 2003]

¹⁷⁷ Jacek Rostowski, “The Struggle For Mastery In Europe,” *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 21 February 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/614> [15 April 2003]

¹⁷⁸ Judy Dempsey, Daniel Dombey and George Parker, “After Iraq,” *Financial Times*, 16 April 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/670> [15 May 2003]

¹⁷⁹ Alexander Rahr, “Blair’s new Europe, Or Europe As Counterbalance,” *Die Welt / BBC Monitoring*, 15 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbfeb03.html> [15 June 2003] or <http://www.dgap.org/english/indexe.htm> [15 June 2003]

Emotional words were never really backed up by the appropriate actions. If France and Germany had truly questioned EU enlargement, today the prospects of the Eastern European countries' EU membership would be different.

The enlargement of the EU is in the interests of both the Eastern and Western European countries. The current European Union members see it as a means to increase the economic and political power of the European Union. Eastern European countries see the EU as the accelerator of their economies and the proof of their moral "return to Europe." The bitterness of the Iraq crisis rhetoric has not undermined the will of Eastern European countries to join the EU. This can be clearly seen in the highly positive outcomes of the recent referendums concerning the Eastern European countries' accession to the EU. The relations of Bulgaria and Romania with France and Germany are getting back on a constructive track, and the next few years will decide the future of their EU membership (currently scheduled for 2007).

Politically, however, some distrust has already been shown towards the Eastern European countries invited to join the EU, notably with regard to their potential impact on the development of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. Ten future EU members were excluded from the EU summit on 17 February 2003, a summit which was called to determine a common position regarding the Iraq crisis, because of what was seen as their excessively "pro-American" security policies. That is, they were seen as a U.S. "Trojan Horse" in the EU in the eyes of the French¹⁸⁰ and, in a more sarcastic formulation, the U.S. "Trojan Donkey" in the eyes of the Germans.¹⁸¹

The invitations (after the British and the Spanish governments lobbied the Greek EU presidency) to the Eastern European countries to participate in the EU summit were

¹⁸⁰ Jacques Julliard, "Chirac, Schröder, encore un effort!", *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 28 January 2003, available at <http://www.nouvelobs.com/articles/p1995/a90020.html> [15 November 2003]

¹⁸¹ "Is Poland America's Donkey Or Could It Become NATO's Horse?" *The Economist*, 10 May 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/natocommand2/message/1539> [15 November 2003]

extended in the morning on 13 February 2002.¹⁸² By the afternoon, after Belgium, France and Germany objected, the invitations were withdrawn.¹⁸³

The EU Greek presidency feared that the divisive crisis in NATO would spill over into the EU at the summit in Brussels on 17 February 2003. The potential incapacity to agree on a common view regarding the Iraq crisis could have been disastrous for the evolving EU Common Foreign and Security Policy.¹⁸⁴ Belgium, France and Germany may have judged that the political stakes were too high to allow the pro-American Eastern European countries' presence at a summit that was already a "high risk gamble" with unpredictable results.¹⁸⁵ The Eastern European countries were irritated by the rejection because it implied that they were not regarded as legitimate de facto future partners by some Western European countries.¹⁸⁶

The Eastern European countries' firm pro-American position also was a warning sign for France that the Eastern European members of the EU will not automatically express enormous gratitude for being allowed to join the EU, nor will they blindly endorse France's aspirations to political primacy in the EU.¹⁸⁷

Eastern European countries hold that they will have a right to express their political views as freely as any other EU member country, and the notion that some countries are more important than others runs against the Eastern European perception of EU values. The Eastern European countries' political views about the Iraq crisis

¹⁸² Sean Maguire, "We Wont Shut Up, Mr Chirac, Says East Europe," *Reuters*, 18 February 2003, available at http://www.revue-politique.com/0_us_review.htm [20 April 2003] or <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.htm> [20 April 2003]

¹⁸³ Tobias Buck and George Parker, "EU Summit Bar On Candidate Countries," *Financial Times*, 13 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.htm> [20 April 2003]

¹⁸⁴ Robert Wielaard, "EU Presidency Fears Iraq Crisis In NATO May Spill Over Into EU," *Associated Press*, 12 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.htm> [20 April 2003]

¹⁸⁵ Tobias Buck and George Parker, "EU Summit Bar On Candidate Countries," *Financial Times*, 13 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.htm> [20 April 2003]

¹⁸⁶ Sean Maguire, "We Won't Shut Up, Mr Chirac, Says East Europe," *Reuters*, 18 February 2003, available at http://www.revue-politique.com/0_us_review.htm [20 April 2003] or <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.htm> [20 April 2003]

¹⁸⁷ Sean Maguire, "We Won't Shut Up, Mr Chirac, Says East Europe," *Reuters*, 18 February 2003, available at http://www.revue-politique.com/0_us_review.htm [20 April 2003] or <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.htm> [20 April 2003]

demonstrated that these countries are interested not simply in joining “Western Clubs” but also in being able to influence them.¹⁸⁸

The entry of Eastern European countries into the EU in May 2004 will probably influence the dynamics and balance of power within EU debates. If the eventual EU Constitution includes weighted majority voting mechanisms on CFSP questions, the Atlanticist camp within the EU led by Britain and Spain will in all likelihood obtain extra votes with the entrance of eight Eastern European countries in the EU in May 2004.

Eastern European countries could already be considered as aligned with the group of continental flank countries (e.g., Britain, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain) which pursue close security cooperation with the United States rather than hypothetical exercises in equilibrium building.¹⁸⁹

It is, moreover, probable that the membership of additional Eastern European countries in the EU and NATO will hamper the pursuit of the French/German design for a more independent European Union foreign and defense policy that would to some degree compete with U.S. dominance in world affairs.¹⁹⁰

The 2002-2003 Iraq crisis showed that European Union nations cannot always agree on the same threat assessment and policy regarding the use of military means, and the situation may become even more complicated when additional Eastern European countries become EU members in May 2004.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Mart Laar, “New Europe Won’t ‘Keep Quiet’ Until All Europe Is New,” *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 19 February 2003, available at http://www.aei.org/research/nai/news/newsID.16116.projectID.11/news_detail.asp [20 April 2003]. Mart Laar is the former prime minister of Estonia.

¹⁸⁹ Ana Palacio, “Allies, Not ‘Counterweights,’” *Wall Street Journal*, 25 March 2003, <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbmar03.html> [10 May 2003]. Ana Palacio is the foreign minister of Spain.

¹⁹⁰ Vladimir Socor, “The Grinding Of A New Axis?,” *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 21 February 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/614> [10 May 2003]

¹⁹¹ Paul Taylor, “EU Iraq Rift Spurs Conflicting Ways Forward,” Reuters, 23 March 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbmar03.html> [20 May 2003]

V. CONCLUSION

In the 2002-2003 Iraq crisis, most Eastern European countries aimed first of all to maintain positive relations with their main strategic partner, the United States. This priority was closely connected with NATO, Eastern Europe's preferred collective defense organization. Eastern European governments were concerned that if they supported the position of France and Germany regarding the Iraq crisis, the greater U.S. frustration with present and future European NATO partners might have eventually led to a weakening of the NATO collective defense commitment and a reduction in U.S. interest in Europe. This outcome would have signified the disappearance of the security guarantee that most Eastern European countries have been seeking since the beginning of the 1990s and that they would prefer to rely on in the long term. These consequences would be absolutely contrary to the Eastern European security efforts since the early 1990s.

Eastern European countries are prepared to make significant efforts to uphold NATO's effectiveness. Support for the U.S. position in the Iraq crisis is definitely intended to diminish the possibility that the United States might fundamentally redefine its interests in Europe.¹⁹²

Indeed, the main mission of Eastern Europe in the future may be to keep the United States effectively engaged in Europe and to sustain NATO's cohesion and relevance. It is possible that NATO will survive in the long term partly because Eastern European countries have enthusiastically embraced this alliance.¹⁹³

If the worst possible security scenario took place and the first fundamental cornerstone of the Eastern European countries – NATO – crumbled, the second backup

¹⁹² Artis Pabriks, "Ja grib mieru...", Latvian daily newspaper *Diena*, 13 February 2003, available at www.diena.lv [13 February 2003]

¹⁹³ Robin Renwick, "Our Greatest Postwar Institutions Will Be Changed For Ever," *The Times*, 3 April 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/658> [10 May 2003]. Robin Renwick was Britain's Ambassador to the United States in 1991-95.

cornerstone – to keep the United States effectively engaged in Europe – could still work to ensure their own national security needs if they had strong bilateral relations with the United States.¹⁹⁴

If a country wants strong support from allies in the future, it should consistently assist them in moments of need. By supporting the United States today, the Eastern European countries are making a long-term investment in their own security.¹⁹⁵

Some observers have speculated that, as a result of the further deterioration of the relations between the United States and the Franco-German bloc, a different kind of trans-Atlantic alliance or ad hoc alliances among some NATO members may emerge in the future,¹⁹⁶ and that Eastern European countries could play an even more significant strategic role in the new security arrangements. However, the pursuit of such a scenario would be extremely unpredictable and highly risky. The Eastern European countries would prefer to satisfy their security needs in NATO's collective defense arrangements.¹⁹⁷ In the words of the Minister of National Defence of Lithuania, Linas Linkevicius, "Ad hoc coalitions may provide a temporary salvation in an immediate crisis but only such a battle-scarred and storm-beaten organization as NATO can be a long term solution."¹⁹⁸

The partnership of Eastern European countries with the United States has evolved in accordance with national interests since the early 1990s and has played an important role in defining these countries' security policy priorities. This trend became publicly obvious in the Iraq crisis. However, security policy developments in Eastern Europe long ago indicated that these governments were taking a pro-American course.

¹⁹⁴ Janusz Bugajski, "Bipolar Europe," *Washington Times*, 17 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.html> [20 April 2003] or <http://www.csis.org/opeds/> [20 April 2003]

¹⁹⁵ Ernest Skalski, "Saddam Can Only Be Disarmed By Force And Poland Should Participate In The War," *Polish News Bulletin / Gazeta Wyborcza*, 27 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.html> [20 April 2003]

¹⁹⁶ Barry Renfrew, "NATO Will Survive Iraq Crisis, Although Weaker And Less United, Analysts Say," *Canadian Press*, 12 February 2003, available at http://quickstart.clari.net/qs_se/webnews/wed/ax/Anato_s-future.RkFi_DFC.html [20 April 2003]

¹⁹⁷ Janusz Bugajski, "Bipolar Europe," *Washington Times*, 17 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.html> [20 April 2003] or <http://www.csis.org/opeds/> [20 April 2003]

¹⁹⁸ Linas Linkevicius, "Life After Enlargement," *Baltic Defence Review*, No. 9 Volume 1/2003, available at http://www.bdcol.ce/bdcol/pdf_files/bdreview/bdr-2003-9-07.pdf [15 November 2003]

The manner in which the Iraq crisis is resolved – including the country’s post-war reconstruction and political orientation – will influence transatlantic relations. Priorities in transatlantic relations may well change. Eastern Europe’s strongly supportive pro-American position may result in closer relations between the United States and Eastern Europe – that is, something similar to U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s concept of “new” and “old” Europe.¹⁹⁹ For example, it may affect prospects regarding the next round of NATO enlargement, the redeployment of U.S. troops in Europe, NATO policy towards the non-NATO countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the Balkans, and Russia; and it may influence the further evolution of NATO’s collective security activities.

The fact that most Eastern European countries decided to support the U.S. position regarding the Iraq crisis and thereby to pursue their hard security policy priority (keeping the United States in NATO and Europe) may influence their pursuit of their other security priority – the development of an enlarged EU.

It seems that the current round of the EU enlargement process, which started in December 2002 at the Copenhagen EU Summit, when ten countries, including eight Eastern European countries, were invited to join the EU, with the final accession protocols to be signed in May 2004, despite some warning signals and even threats from French President Jacques Chirac, will not suffer from the difference between Eastern European views and the views of some Western European countries about resolving the Iraq crisis.

The predominant attitude in France and Germany during the Iraq crisis revealed a perception that Eastern European countries lack appropriate gratefulness for the years of substantial EU regional aid provided to prepare these countries to enter the EU.²⁰⁰ However, Eastern European countries regard EU enlargement as part of an historical

¹⁹⁹ United States Department of Defense, News Transcript, Presenter: Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, 22 January 2003, Secretary Rumsfeld Briefs at the Foreign Press Center, available at http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jan2003/t01232003_t0122sdfpc.html [20 May 2003]

²⁰⁰ Judy Dempsey, Daniel Dombey, and George Parker, “After Iraq,” *Financial Times*, 16 April 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/670> [20 May 2003]

process of reuniting the continent and building stability in Europe, and not as a gesture of good will and generosity from the EU to its Eastern European neighbors.²⁰¹

The evolving EU Common Foreign and Security Policy has certainly suffered from the Iraq crisis, but it has probably been more affected by quarrels among current EU member states than by the pro-American position of the Eastern European countries invited to join the EU in 2004.

Chris Patten, the EU Commissioner for External Relations, called the rift among European Union countries on the Iraq question the “greatest failure of foreign and security policy [of the EU].”²⁰²

Nevertheless, the present inability of the EU member states to find common ground may reinforce the Eastern European perception of the United States and NATO as the only reliable security guarantors and may promote skeptical views in Eastern Europe regarding the usefulness of the EU’s efforts to define a CFSP.

The predominant policy in the present situation illustrates security perceptions in Eastern Europe. Peace and stability in the “hard security” meaning in this region will probably remain dependent on the United States for a long time. Whether France and Germany – or the European Union as a whole – can ever replace the United States in protecting the national security interests of Eastern European countries remains to be seen in the future.

Because of their national ambitions, some European Union countries (above all, France and Germany) have been reluctant to acknowledge this fact, and this reality has been received as an unexpected surprise.

Eastern European countries’ stands regarding the Iraq crisis in 2002-2003 represented a natural continuation of security policies initiated in the early 1990s, and presumably they will be sustained in the post-Iraq crisis era.

²⁰¹ “Chirac Lambasting Prompts Sharp Reactions In Poland And Other Candidate Countries,” *Polish News Bulletin*, 20 February 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/610> [20 April 2003]

²⁰² Chris Patten quoted in “More Divided Than Ever, ...”, *El Pais - English Edition*, 25 March 2003, available at <http://www.topica.com/lists/nato1/read/message.html?sort=d&mid=907152353&start=479> [20 April 2003]

The reactions of most Eastern European governments to the Iraq crisis bring into focus these countries' determination to connect their security policies and the future development of Eastern Europe with the strongest power in international affairs. Eastern European countries' actions, reflecting a pro-American position regarding the Iraq crisis, must be understood as based on consistent pragmatic assessments of national interests in international security. In his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ronald Asmus underlined the important future connection between Eastern European countries and the United States: "The United States is making the most sacred of all commitments -- a pledge to go to the defense of these countries in a future crisis."²⁰³

Eastern European countries hold that the United States is still needed in Europe. In the words of Aleksander Smolar, president of the Stefan Batory Foundation in Warsaw, "The U.S. is more credible for us as a guarantor of security than western Europe, which is still looking for an idea of security and cannot assure its reality."²⁰⁴

Indeed, they consider the United States their main partner in resolving future Eastern European security dilemmas.²⁰⁵ Despite the EU's progress in the monetary and institutional spheres, reliable EU collective defense arrangements still seem distant and hypothetical.²⁰⁶ Although some leaders in France and Germany may judge that they no longer need United States protection, Eastern European countries regard the United States military umbrella as the main guarantee of their national security.²⁰⁷ The Eastern European countries see the United States as the only country with enough military capability and political will to defend them in a crisis.

²⁰³ Ronald Asmus, "The Future Of NATO," Testimony Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 1 April 2003, available at <http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2003/AsmusTestimony030401.pdf> [20 May 2003]

²⁰⁴ Aleksander Smolar quoted in Duncan Shiels, "East Europe Engaged to EU, Flirts With Old Flame US," *Daily News*, 13 May 2003, available at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2003/05/19/fea03.html> [20 May 2003]

²⁰⁵ Janet McEvoy, "Iraq Crisis Exposes Tussle For Eastern Europe's Loyalties," *Agence France-Presse*, 9 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.html> [20 April 2003]

²⁰⁶ Paul Johnson, "Au Revoir, Petite France," *Wall Street Journal*, 22 March 2003, available at http://www.travelbrochuregraphics.com/extra/au_revoir_petite_france.htm [20 April 2003]

²⁰⁷ Max Boot, "Power: Resentment Comes With The Territory," *Washington Post*, 23 March 2003, available at <http://www.benadorassociates.com/article/292> [20 April 2003]

Consequently, for Eastern European countries reliance on the United States as the main security guarantor overshadows the possible risk of disappointing major EU countries such as France and Germany.²⁰⁸

According to analyst Vladimir Socor, “Every one of these 13 nations knows that its entire future, its security and independence, are a function of membership in NATO, which is an alliance led by the United States. In fact, most of these countries regard their membership in NATO as a means to become allied to the U.S. The disparity of power between the U.S. and the other NATO members is so great that for the newly free nations, NATO is a means for a bilateral relationship with the United States.”²⁰⁹

The threat perceptions and security values in Eastern European countries are different from those in Western Europe because of their different historical experiences, notably in the twentieth century. These countries experienced not only the rough and treacherous diplomacy of the interwar period (which culminated in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) and the harsh (and relatively short) Nazi occupation, but also the extremely long and severe Communist dictatorship. During the decades after 1945 in which Western European countries enjoyed freedom and democracy, the Eastern Europeans for nearly half a century suffered from Soviet totalitarianism. This grim historical experience and recently regained freedom and democracy have led Eastern European countries to look for the most reliable assurance of the irreversibility of their independence and sovereignty. This trend is highlighted in Eastern European confidence in the United States as their ultimate ally.²¹⁰

The Eastern Europeans are not only worried about the potential domination of the EU by France and Germany, but about the possibility that the United States may be excluded from European security affairs. The political fragmentation of Europe, the

²⁰⁸ Jean-Luc Testault, “Eastern European Leaders Defy Public Opinion To Back Bush,” Agence France-Presse, 14 March 2003, available at <http://www.mail-archive.com/antinato@topica.com/msg08405.html> [20 April 2003]

²⁰⁹ Vladimir Socor quoted in Eugen Tomiuc, “Eastern Europe: Does The Vilnius 10 Group Have A Future?” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 11 February 2003, available at <http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/2003/02/11022003175025.asp> [20 November 2003]

²¹⁰ Mart Laar, “New Europe Won’t ‘Keep Quiet’ Until All Europe Is New,” *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 19 February 2003, available at http://www.aei.org/research/nai/news/newsID.16116.projectID.11/news_detail.asp [20 April 2003]

frustration in the United States with European allies, and the potential weakening of NATO also reinforce the Eastern European countries' concerns about the potential growth of Russian influence in these new circumstances.²¹¹

Eastern European countries will not accept an overarching “pan-European” collective security arrangement distancing them from the United States. Moreover, Eastern European countries will not trade the U.S.-led NATO security umbrella for a hypothetical European Union defense. From a hard security perspective, Eastern European countries are fully satisfied to be or soon become NATO members.²¹² No Eastern European country wants to exchange NATO for the weaker and fractious European Union ESDP (European Security and Defense Policy) led by France and Germany.²¹³ Eastern European governments view NATO and the EU's ESDP as complementary rather than competitive.

Eastern European countries also do not want the ESDP to decrease the role of NATO or that of the United States in Europe. Any EU push in that direction or any sign of a United States return to isolationism that could lead to the removal of U.S. military capabilities in Europe would meet strong political resistance from Eastern European governments because U.S. disengagement would directly and inevitably undermine Eastern European security.

From the point of view of Eastern European governments, NATO must remain the prime security guarantor and the permanent bridge closely binding the United States with Europe.²¹⁴

Before the 2002-2003 Iraq crisis, Eastern European security policies could be described as moderately pro-American. The explicitness of the stands that all countries

²¹¹ Janusz Bugajski, “Bipolar Europe,” *Washington Times*, 17 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbf03.html> [20 April 2003] or <http://www.csis.org/opeds/> [20 April 2003]

²¹² Alexandra Richie, “New Europeans Know Who Their Allies Are,” *National Post*, 6 March 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/630> [20 April 2003]

²¹³ Barry Renfrew, “NATO Will Survive Iraq Crisis, Although Weaker And Less United, Analysts Say,” *Canadian Press*, 12 February 2003, available at http://quickstart.clari.net/qs_se/webnews/wed/ax/Anato_s-future.RkFi_DFC.html [20 April 2003]

²¹⁴ David Sands, “Central, E. Europe To Stand With U.S.,” *Washington Times*, 20 February 2003, available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEDB/message/613> [20 April 2003]

had to take regarding how to resolve the Iraq crisis did not leave much space for diplomatic maneuvers by the countries of Eastern Europe. Due to these inflexible circumstances, Eastern European countries have moved toward even more pro-American political positions.

Eastern European countries could not allow themselves to take risks concerning the future of NATO, given their deep doubts about the stability and reliability of the security environment since the beginning of the 1990s. The debates over the International Criminal Court, the Kyoto Protocol, and the role of the United Nations in global affairs have shown that in “soft” security questions Eastern European countries do not necessarily share the U.S. positions.

Eastern European countries have demonstrated that they want to participate actively in two alliances which are of major importance for the United States: NATO and the U.S.-led coalition against terrorism and rogue states.²¹⁵

The choice in this case for Eastern European countries was whether to get involved in questions affecting the strength and military reliability of NATO. They faced the extreme possibility of NATO’s collective defense value being undermined, with the Alliance transformed into an “OSCE-like organization,” if the United States decided to withdraw from Europe and NATO. Eastern European countries emphasized that the United States has new and reliable allies in Europe, and that they see NATO as the main venue for future cooperation.

Eastern European reactions to the 2002-2003 Iraq crisis cannot be described in terms of an absolute choice between Europe and America or between the EU and NATO. Both NATO and the EU are top priorities for Eastern European governments, as well as good relations with the United States and the member nations of the European Union. When Eastern European countries decided to take their positions regarding the Iraq crisis, jeopardizing EU enlargement was not considered as a tradeoff or possible consequence of taking these positions. The EU member nations were not able to establish a durable common position on the Iraq crisis.

²¹⁵ Vladimir Socor, “Better Than ‘Seven Belgiums’”, *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 7- 9 February 2003, available at http://www.israeleconomy.org/eng_editor/wallstreet.php?article_id=160 [20 April 2003]

Concerning the hypothetical “choice” between NATO and the EU, for Eastern European countries the two organizations are interdependent and complementary.²¹⁶ In the words of the Romanian Prime Minister, Adrian Nastase, “We should not be divided and we should not have false debates ... NATO and the EU are complementary organisations for us. We don't want to see Europe and America as rivals.”²¹⁷

The old questions in Europe about relations with the United States will take new forms with the inclusion of the Eastern European countries in NATO and the European Union.²¹⁸ Eastern European countries will definitely have an important role in the future of transatlantic relations.²¹⁹

Another feature that highlighted Eastern European behavior at the time of the Iraq crisis was the appearance of Eastern Europe as a bloc. The unanimous voice of the Eastern European countries was heard clearly regarding both NATO and EU issues. Moreover, the unified position of Eastern Europe overshadows by far such traditional groupings as the Scandinavian countries or the European neutral and non-aligned states. The United States and many Western European countries now regard the Eastern Europe countries as a reliable bloc. If the Eastern European countries manage to maintain this bloc, they may well constitute an influential force in NATO as well as the EU.

²¹⁶ “A Coalition Of The Moral,” *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 6 February 2003, available at <http://www.expandnato.org/como.html> [20 April 2003]

²¹⁷ Adrian Nastase quoted in Stefan Wagstyl, “Romania Fears Further Transatlantic Rift,” *Financial Times*, 13 March 2003, available at <http://www.gov.ro/presa/inftari/4/revp-030313-ft-intv-an.htm> [20 April 2003]

²¹⁸ David Howell, “Is The “Other Europe” Emerging?”, *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 12 February 2003, available at <http://www.davidhowell-themes.com/article72%20-%20Old%20Europe.htm> [20 April 2003]

²¹⁹ “More Divided Than Ever, ...,” *El Pais - English Edition*, 25 March 2003, available at <http://www.topica.com/lists/nato1/read/message.html?sort=d&mid=907152353&start=479> [20 April 2003]

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